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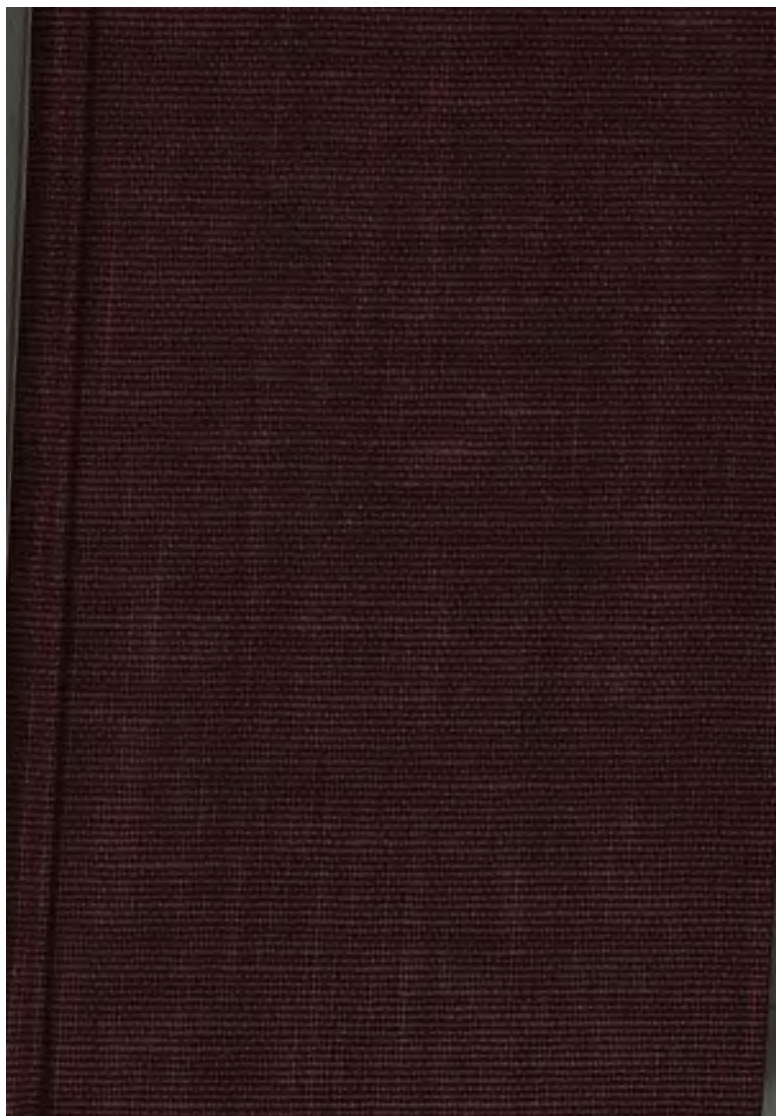
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Ebenezer Fox

Aged 75 Years in Jan. 1838.

THE
ADVENTURES
OF
EBENEZER FOX,
IN
THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR.

ILLUSTRATED BY
ELEGANT ENGRAVINGS

FROM
ORIGINAL DESIGNS.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY CHARLES FOX.
1847.

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GIFT OF
JARED SPARKS
1847

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By CHARLES FOX,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the District of
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SALEM, March 5th, 1847.

DEAR SIR :

Allow me to thank you for the little volume you had the kindness to send to me, containing an account of the adventures of your father during the war of the Revolution. The singular character of the adventures themselves, and the spirited manner in which they are described, give the work a very lively interest. The narrative presents in a striking light some of the remarkable incidents of the war, and particularly the sufferings on board the Old Jersey Prison-Ship. Such narratives are doubly valuable, as exhibiting events of history at the same time they make us acquainted with the personal experience of the actors. It gives me pleasure to be able to add this little book to my library.

Accept the regards and thanks of

Yours, respectfully,

JARED SPARKS.

CHARLES FOX, Esq.

P R E F A C E .

"GRANDFATHER," said my eldest grandchild, last Thanksgiving eve, "I wish you would relate to us all your revolutionary stories. You have told us a great many stories, but we wish very much to hear the whole at once."

In this request the second joined, who was soon followed by the third, while the fourth caught me by the hand, saying, "Do, grandpa, tell us something about the war." "O yes, do, grandpa," said the fifth; while the next, a little boy of three, jumped up on my knee, and lisped out his request that I would tell a story; and the baby, making her way into the circle, added to the clamor with the most articulate sounds she could utter; and then all seven joined in one grand chorus, though not in unison, and the burden of the song was, "*Do tell us your revolutionary adventures.*"

Now I love nothing better than giving pleasure

to children ; and, although this was rather a comprehensive request, I at length consented to give them a connected recital of the adventures of my youth, during a time when everything was interesting to those who love excitement and action.

Accordingly, when the young folks had tired themselves with "blind-man's-buff" and various other games, with which I am not acquainted, they formed a circle round the fire and called on me for the fulfilment of my promise.

But to their great disappointment, I soon found that a troublesome cough, which I had in the winter, effectually prevented my giving them anything like the connected narrative they were so desirous to hear.

They all expressed so much regret at being deprived of their anticipated pleasure, and it seemed so unlikely that I should be any better able to gratify them, that I at length concluded to commit my adventures to writing, and give the manuscript to one of my grandchildren to read to the others.

This decision met with general approbation, and I commenced my task.

Though I am an old man of seventy-five, I am an earlier riser than most of my grandchildren,

PREFACE.



and was generally up an hour or two before sunrise in the winter, and used to tell them at breakfast that I had written several pages before they were awake.

As I had nothing to interrupt me, and the reminiscences of my younger days proved very interesting to myself, I was able to recollect much more than I expected I should; for the events which occur in our youth, especially such as it has been my lot to participate in, make a much more lasting impression on our minds than those of a later period, when we have become more accustomed to the vicissitudes of life.

One circumstance after another revived in my memory, and was detailed on paper,—until I found that my manuscript had increased to a much larger size than I, or those for whose pleasure it was written, had anticipated.

At last, to their great delight, it was completed; and was received with so much approbation by the young auditors, that it was thought it might be interesting to maturer minds; and it was lent to several friends, who expressed so favorable an opinion of it, and were so desirous that I should give the public an account of my revolutionary adventures, that I have consented to prepare for the press the manuscript originally intended for

my own family, with the hope that it may prove as interesting to the rising generation, as it has to my own grandchildren.

Should it be thought that my simple narrative does not contain matter of importance sufficient to interest the reader, I can only say, that the partial judgment of friends, and my belief that any circumstances relating to the most interesting period of our history, would prove entertaining to the young, must be my excuse for presenting it to the public.

REVOLUTIONARY ADVENTURES
OF
EBENEZER FOX.

INTRODUCTION.

THE year 1763, in which I was born, was signalized by the conclusion of the treaty of peace between England and France, at the termination of the long and harassing war, known as the "Old French War."

The colonies had borne the foremost part in the conflict, with very slight assistance from the mother country; and as their men and money had been freely contributed, and every demand of the English government promptly complied with, the close of the war found the colonies in a state of great depression, impoverished and dispirited.

Throughout the country, hardly a town could be found, which had not sent out its little band of warriors, or aided in defraying the expenses of the soldiers, and many had lost relatives or friends in the prolonged contest; while those who returned to their homes were, many of them, sick and enfeebled from the exposure and hardships which they had encountered.

It would have seemed but just and reasonable, that the scarcity of money and the condition of business should have exempted the colonies from the additional burden of taxation.

But such was not the opinion of the British ministry. Although the colonies had until this period been permitted to tax themselves, without the interference of England, parliament now, with an apparent determination to reduce them to the lowest condition of servitude, passed an act in 1764, which imposed a duty on several articles, and the preamble to which was in these words:

“Whereas it is *just* and necessary, that a revenue be raised in America, for defraying

the expenses of *defending, protecting,* and securing the same, we, the commons," &c. &c.

The colonies considered this act extremely unjust and arbitrary; but, while they would not admit the right to tax them, it was submitted to, though not in silence.

The patience of the colonists, and their respect for their own rights, were insulted in the following year by the passage of the famous stamp act, which effectually aroused the spirit of liberty in every American bosom, and excited so universal a storm of indignation throughout the country, that the English parliament felt obliged to repeal it.

The satisfaction of the colonies was of short duration; for, in 1767, an act was passed, imposing heavy duties on glass, paper, tea, &c., and was followed by several equally vexatious, and the dissatisfaction of the people was renewed; meetings were called in various parts of the country, and resolutions passed against the measures of the British government.

Among many other insults against the feel-

ings of the people, the stationing of garrisons in New York and Boston was particularly obnoxious; and in the former city, the house of assembly was suspended by the governor, for refusing to pass a bill supplying the soldiers with provisions, &c.

In 1768, the arrival of two regiments of British soldiers in Boston, which were stationed in the *State-House*, in consequence of the inhabitants refusing to furnish quarters for them, excited the most intense hatred and resentment against the tyranny and oppression of government, and was an insult to the house of their public assembly which could not be tolerated.

The assembly, considering the peace and dignity of their house violated by the presence of British troops, refused to hold their council, unless the soldiers were removed.

The governor therefore adjourned them to Cambridge, and demanded a supply of money for the troops, which was of course refused, as derogatory to the dignity of the Province.

In 1769, parliament, as if resolved to try every sort of insult, in an address to the king,

requested him to give orders to the governor of Massachusetts,—which had shown a more determined spirit of resistance than any other colony,—to send all who might be guilty of treason to England, that they might be *tried there*.

The house of burgesses of Virginia met soon after, and passed a resolution, “denying the right of his majesty to remove an offender out of the country for trial.” The next day the governor dissolved the house. The assembly of North Carolina followed the example, and were likewise dissolved by their governor.

In 1770, on the fifth of March, a violent tumult, produced by an affray between the soldiers and citizens, in which several of the latter were killed, still more enraged the people against these instruments of arbitrary power; and the anniversary of this outrage was for several years commemorated by addresses to the public, which served to keep awake the spirit of independence.

The detested *duty on tea* was imposed in 1773, and *no American* can forget *how it was received*, particularly in Boston.

In the same year England, desirous to crush the spirit of *rebellion*, as it was termed, decreed that all public officers should be rendered independent of the colonies, by receiving their salaries directly from the crown, without the concurrence of the colonial assemblies.

This measure, tending as it did to deprive the Americans of all their rights and to reduce them to mere bondsmen, increased instead of subduing the determination to secure the liberty of the country.

Regular clubs were formed, each headed by a chief, in all the principal towns of Massachusetts, with a system of correspondence between them; and it became evident to all, that a conflict must soon take place between England and her wronged and insulted colonies. The other provinces followed the example of Massachusetts, and similar associations were formed throughout the country.

In retaliation for this, and similar manifestations of the determination to resist the British government, the "Boston Port Bill" was brought forward in parliament and

passed as a just punishment to that rebellious city, which had been foremost in *rebellion*.

In September, 1774, the first congress was convened, consisting of deputies from eleven of the colonies.

This assembly agreed upon a declaration of their rights; passed many important and spirited resolutions; and, having finished their business in less than eight weeks, dissolved themselves, recommending another congress to be convened on the tenth of May ensuing.

No one, who is at all acquainted with the history of our country, needs to be reminded of the events which followed in the next year, the memorable 1775, which dates the commencement of our Revolution.

An account of the action at Lexington was transmitted to Great Britain by the provincial Congress of Massachusetts, which was then in session, and in conclusion they used this language :

“Appealing to Heaven for the justice of our cause, we determine to die, or be free.”

The battle at Lexington was followed in

rapid succession by the taking of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, and the *Battle of Bunker's Hill*, which taught England that it would be no easy task to repress, or resist, the spirit of liberty which animated the heart of every American.

From this time, the *rebels*, as they were termed in England, daunted by no obstacle and discouraged by no dangers, went steadily forward in the great contest, which resulted in forcing our insolent oppressors to admit that *Americans could not be conquered*; and obliging Great Britain to acknowledge, and respect, the independence of the people she had wantonly insulted and despised.

From this rapid sketch of the period immediately preceding our Revolution, the facts of which are no doubt familiar to every reader of American history, it will be seen, that my childhood was passed in the midst of excitement, and every year was marked by events of the most intense and absorbing interest.

CHAPTER I.

I WAS born in the East Parish of Roxbury, state of Massachusetts, January 30th, 1763.

Nothing out of the ordinary course of human events occurred, of which I have any recollection, until I arrived to the age of seven.

My father, who was a tailor, being poor and having a large family, thought that my physical powers were adequate, at this time of life, to my own maintenance ; and placed me under the care of a farmer named Pelham. The house in which that gentleman resided was situated in what was then called Roxbury Street.*

* Mr. Pelham's house stood upon the spot now occupied by the store of Deacon Caleb Parker, and his farm was the land near the Creek, belonging to the heirs of the late Rev. Dr. Porter.

One day, while employed in the field, I left my work, being alone, to try my skill at riding on horseback ; and, while attempting to put on the bridle, the horse suddenly bit a piece of flesh from my cheek, the scar of which is evident to this day.

With him I continued five years, performing such services in the house and upon the farm as were adapted to my age and strength. I imagined, however, that I suffered many privations and endured much hardship; which was undoubtedly true, were my situation compared with that of many other boys of my age at that time, or in this more refined period. Boys are apt to complain of their lot, especially when deprived of the indulgences of home. They do not estimate their advantages or disadvantages by comparison; but view them in the abstract, and judge their circumstances as the results of positive evil, when they might be considered as comparative blessings.

I had for some time been dissatisfied with my situation, and was desirous of some change. I had made frequent complaints of a grievous nature to my father; but he paid no attention to them, supposing that I had no just cause for them, and that they arose merely from a spirit of discontent which would soon subside.

Expressions of exasperated feeling against

the government of Great Britain, which had for a long time been indulged and pretty freely expressed, were now continually heard from the mouths of all classes; from father and son, from mother and daughter, from master and slave. A spirit of disaffection pervaded the land; groans and complaints, and injustice and wrongs were heard on all sides. Violence and tumult soon followed.

Almost all the conversation that came to my ears related to the injustice of England and the tyranny of government.

It is perfectly natural that the spirit of insubordination, that prevailed, should spread among the younger members of the community; that they, who were continually hearing complaints, should themselves become complainants. I, and other boys situated similarly to myself, thought we had wrongs to be redressed; rights to be maintained; and, as no one appeared disposed to act the part of a redresser, it was our duty and our privilege to assert our own rights. We made a direct application of the doctrines we daily heard, in relation to

the oppression of the mother country, to our own circumstances; and thought that we were more oppressed than our fathers were. I thought that I was doing myself great injustice by remaining in bondage, when I ought to go free; and that the time was come, when I should liberate myself from the thralldom of others, and set up a government of my own; or, in other words, do what was right in the sight of my own eyes.

In all great undertakings a friend is needed, with whom we can advise and consult. Men experience this want, and seldom is any remarkable achievement effected alone and unaided. I felt the necessity of acting in unison with some one, who should be actuated by the same motives as myself, and have a similar object in view.

I sought a friend, and found one in a companion with whom I had long associated, John Kelley, who was a little older than myself. To him I imparted my views and wishes in regard to future operations.

We held many consultations in secret, and, mutual confidence being established,

we came to the sage conclusion, that we were living in a state of servitude that ought to be scorned by the sons of freemen.

In our opinion we were abundantly capable of providing for our own wants; of assuming all the responsibilities of life; and needed no protectors.

Our plan was soon formed, which was nothing less than to furnish ourselves with whatever we thought indispensable for our undertaking, to leave home privately, and take the most direct route to Providence, R. I., where we expected to find employment as sailors on board of some vessel.

Our greatest trouble was to raise the means for the expedition. Having collected what few articles we possessed and securing them in two small bundles, we secreted them in a barn at some distance from our habitation.

The place for our meeting was the steps of the church, which stood where the Rev. Mr. Putnam's now stands.* According to

* The Rev. Mr. Adams was the pastor then. Deacon Crafts, grandfather of Mr. E. Crafts of Roxbury, used to read aloud one verse at a time of the psalm or hymn, which the choir would sing, and then wait till he had read another.

appointment, I found my friend Kelley on the spot at eight o'clock in the evening on the eighteenth of April, the night before the memorable battle of Lexington.

Kelley's first question to me was, "How much money have you got?" I replied, "A half a dollar." "That is just what I have got," said Kelley, "though I might have taken as much as I wanted from the old tory; but I thought I would not take any more than what belonged to me."

I know not whether this proceeded from Kelley's principle of honesty, or from a fear of pursuit, in case he had embezzled anything which would render him an object

Hymn-books were not in general use; they were, some time after, in the pews of the wealthy part of the congregation. At a subsequent period, a kind of music, called *Fugue-tunes*, was introduced; and they had a literally *fugue-ing* effect upon the elder people, the greater part of whom went out of church as soon as the first verse was sung.

I very well remember the first Sabbath that the first bass-viol was used, as an accompaniment to the singing. The old pious people were horror-struck at what they considered a sacrilegious innovation, and went out of meeting in high dudgeon. One old church member, I recollect, stood at the church-door, and showed his contempt for the music by making a sort of caterwauling noise, which he called "*mocking the Banjo*."

worth pursuing. Kelley had lived with a gentleman named Winslow, who was highly esteemed for his benevolence and other virtues; but, being a friend to the royal government, he was stigmatized with the epithet of "Tory," and considered an enemy to his country, and was finally obliged to leave the place when the British troops evacuated Boston. After spending some time in making arrangements, we started about nine o'clock at night, and travelled till we arrived at Jamaica Plain and stopped on the door-steps of the Rev. Dr. Gordon's* church to rest ourselves and hold a consultation.

We concluded to continue on our route, and directed our course to Dedham, where we arrived shortly after ten the same night.

As I have observed, this was on the night previous to the battle of Lexington. At that time, much excitement prevailed in the public mind. Great anxiety was manifested in the country in the vicinity of Boston to know what was going on there. People were out in all directions to hear

* Till within a few years the Rev. Dr. Gray's.

the "news from town." As we were too young to be very well informed in regard to coming events, and were ignorant of the great plans in agitation, our fears induced us to think that the uncommon commotion that appeared to prevail must have some connexion with our escape, and that the moving multitudes we saw were in pursuit of us. Our consciences reproved us a little for the step we had taken, and our fears magnified the dangers to which we were exposed.

After making some cautious inquiries at Dedham, we directed our course to Walpole with the intention of reaching it that night.

About eleven o'clock, finding ourselves excessively fatigued, we determined upon taking up our night's lodging on the ground by the side of a stone wall.

With feelings of despondence I stretched myself upon the earth, with my bundle for a pillow, and observed to my companion, "This is hard lodging, Kelley, but we may have harder;" little anticipating the hardship and suffering I was to endure in some

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“ We were again assailed with more questions than we knew how to answer.” P. 23.

succeeding years. After a cold and uncomfortable night's rest, we started before day, and reached Walpole about ten o'clock in the morning.

Before we entered the village, we stopped at a tavern and called for a bowl of bread and milk, the price of which was three pence; but the kind-hearted landlord refused to take any compensation. We now were constantly meeting with people, who, anxious to hear the news from Boston, frequently interrogated us respecting whence we came and whither we were going, &c.; in answering which we adhered as nearly to the truth as our fears of discovery would permit.

We stopped at Mann's tavern in Walpole, and here a multitude of people collected, having apparently some great object in agitation. Being seen coming in the direction from Boston, we were again assailed with more questions than we knew how to answer consistently with our safety. The tavern-keeper excited our apprehensions by abruptly asking us whither we were going?

"To seek our fortunes," we replied.

"You have taken hard times for it," and he advised us to return home.

During this conversation, the stage coach from Boston arrived at the tavern, where the passengers were to dine. They brought the news of the Lexington battle, with an exaggerated account of a loss on the side of the British of two hundred men, and on that of the American of only thirty. This was received with loud shouts of exultation, while the militia marched off full of ardor and zeal.*

By this time, my companion and myself felt the need of some refreshment; but our funds would not permit us to indulge our appetites with the luxury of a dinner; we therefore contented ourselves with a simple luncheon.

Tired of walking, our next object was to

* The exaggerated account of the battle of Lexington must have been merely of that part of it which happened about sunrise, the firing of the British upon the militia assembled upon the green near the meeting-house.

The subsequent fighting at Lexington was too late in the day, for the passengers in the stage to give any information at the time they arrived at Walpole.

drive a bargain with the coachman for a ride to Providence. The price demanded was one and sixpence for each of us, and that upon condition that one should ride with the coachman and the other on the baggage.

The coachman's seat to stage-coaches in those days was not the comfortable place which it now is; and the baggage used to be fastened directly upon the hind axle-tree. Racks and such-like conveniences are the improvements of modern times. To sit upon the baggage, then, could not be considered a great privilege, and it required not a little exertion to keep one's position. For such accommodations one and sixpence each we considered an exorbitant price; and, after a great deal of haggling, a bargain was made to carry us both for two and eightpence. We left Walpole about one o'clock, and arrived in Providence about sunset.

Any one, who has experienced the forlorn and destitute feelings that arise in the mind when he feels himself alone in a strange city, may easily imagine what ours were at this time. The moving multitudes were

returning to their homes, after their daily occupations were over, to meet their families and their friends and to spend the quiet night. But we, two poor boys, had no home to receive us, no friends to welcome us.

Solitary and desolate, we felt as it were "strangers in a strange land." We wandered about the streets, without seeing or expecting to see any one who would afford us any assistance, or sympathize in our distress. Hungry and weary, with but thirty coppers in our pockets, it would be, we thought, unjustifiable extravagance to indulge our appetites with the luxuries which a tavern might afford; we accordingly, seated upon the steps of a church, attempted to appease the cravings of hunger upon some provisions in our bundles, with which we had the precaution to provide ourselves before leaving Roxbury. Having finished our scanty meal, we found night approaching, and that it was necessary to obtain lodgings somewhere at a small expense.

Our design in coming to Providence naturally led us to the part of the town where

the shipping lay. We found a vessel at a wharf, which appeared to have no person on board. We went on to her deck, and, finding the cabin doors open, entered, took possession of two vacant berths, in which we slept soundly till morning, when we left the vessel without meeting with any person belonging to her.

We strolled about the town with spirits considerably depressed, and breakfasted upon what remained of the cold food on which we had supped the night previous.

I and my companion then thought it best to separate, for the purpose of seeking employment, in different directions; and we parted without thinking to fix upon any time or place for a subsequent meeting. I have since ascertained, that Kelley found employment on board of a vessel, and went to sea. What was his fate I know not; for, after that day I never saw him, nor to the present time have I ever heard any more respecting him than what I have related. Should he meet with these pages, he is informed that I reside in the town from which we absconded sixty-three years ago.

He would find me altered in the appearance I presented to him in our last interview. But probably he has long since gone to that world "from whose bourne no traveller returns," and to which my age and infirmities admonish me that I must soon repair.

In the course of my perambulations I went into the market-house, and while there I saw a gentleman who was addressed by the name of Curtis. He was habited according to the fashion of gentlemen in those days; a three-cornered hat, a club wig, a long coat of ample dimensions that appeared to have been made with reference to future growth; breeches with large buckles, and shoes fastened in the same manner, completed his dress.

His face appeared familiar to me, and, feeling some interest in him, I was induced to make some inquiries respecting him, and found that his christian name was Obadiah; and that he had lately removed to Providence from Boston. With this gentleman an aunt of mine, a sister of my mother, had lived in Boston, and I thought it probable that she might have removed to Providence with his family.

With this impression I followed Mr. Curtis to his house, and to my great joy found my aunt. She expressed some surprise at seeing me so far from home; and I had to exercise not a little art, and to depart not a little from the truth, to account for my unexpected visit. My aunt, however, extracted enough from the answers to her many questions to satisfy herself that I had left home without the knowledge of my parents. After satisfying my appetite with an abundance of good things, to which I had been some days a stranger, she endeavored to persuade me to give up my project of going to sea, and to return to Roxbury. This I obstinately refused, and finding it useless to remonstrate with me any more, she dropped the subject, after warning me of many evils which might ensue if I persisted in my undertaking. To this good woman was I indebted for sustenance while I remained in Providence, and for many articles of clothing, of which I was in great need.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER seeking for a situation on board of some vessel for several days, I at length found one in the service of Capt. Joseph Manchester, who was in the employ of Nathaniel Angier. I shipped in the capacity of cabin boy, for a compensation of twenty-one shillings per month, to go to Cape François in the island of St. Domingo. The wages of the sailors were forty-two shillings per month.

By the assistance of my good aunt, in a few days I was tolerably well equipped for the voyage. The vessel was hauled off into the stream, and shortly after we sailed for our destined port. This being the first time I ever was at sea, I experienced a considerable amount of that mental and bodily prostration called "sea-sickness;" but in a few days I became accustomed to the motion of the vessel, and recovered my usual health and spirits.

Being what is termed a "green hand," I had everything to learn that belonged to my duties; and of course made some blunders, for which I received more curses than thanks.

Among other misfortunes, I unluckily placed a large pot of butter in the larboard locker, without the precaution to fasten it in its place. It rolled out in the course of the night, and the fragments of the pot together with the contents were scattered about near the foot of the cabin steps. At the time of the accident the captain was upon deck, and having occasion to go below, he stepped into the midst of the greasy particles and measured his length upon the floor. The butter received a stamp of considerable magnitude in the form of a head, which, although it served to protect the captain's from any lamentable damage, did not shield mine from a volley of oaths and threats arising from the irritation of the moment at the awkward predicament in which he found himself placed.

After a pleasant voyage of about fourteen days, we arrived in sight of our destined

port. That part of St. Domingo in which Cape François is situated was then in possession of the French; and, in regard to certain articles, trade was prohibited between the inhabitants and the American colonies. Some management was therefore necessary to obtain the cargo we wanted. A boat was sent ashore to inform certain merchants who were expecting us, of our arrival. In the morning a pilot came to our assistance, and we were soon anchored in the harbor of Cape François.

We carried out staves and hoops in a state of preparation to be converted into hogsheads; and I worked at coopering till we were ready to receive our cargo. Having filled the hogsheads with molasses, which was apparently all our cargo, we set sail, and afterwards took on board a quantity of coffee, a prohibited article, which was conveyed to us by vessels employed for that purpose.

Our loading being thus completed, we directed our course for Providence, and after a passage of about fifteen days we arrived at Stonington, Connecticut.

During our absence from home, the Revolutionary war had commenced, and we found that the British had begun their depredations upon our commerce and maritime towns.

We left Stonington in the night, entertaining the hope, that, with a favorable wind, we might get into Providence without being discovered by the British cruisers, which we knew were cruising somewhere between Newport and Providence.

If the breeze had continued favorable, we should have effected our object; but, unfortunately, the wind subsided a little before daylight, and in the morning we found ourselves close by the enemy, consisting of two ships of war, and a small vessel called a tender between them and the land. The American commander, Commodore Whipple, with a naval force greatly inferior to the British, was seen by us, higher up the bay, out of reach of the enemy, making signals for us to press all sail and approach. But unluckily we were ignorant of the meaning of the signals, and did not know whether they came from a friend or an

enemy. As the cruisers were to the windward of us, we tacked one way and the other, hoping that we should be able to beat up the bay; but, finding that the tender was about to intercept our progress in one direction, while the cruisers approached us in the other, and no chance of escape appearing, we bore away and ran our vessel ashore.

Preparations were hastily made for leaving the vessel, our captain having given permission to all, who were disposed to run the risk, to make their escape. The mate and crew jumped overboard and swam for the shore where they all arrived safe, although fired upon by the British tender.

Captain Manchester, supposing that I should be unable to reach the shore by swimming, kindly advised me to remain on board with him and be taken prisoner. I hesitated a short time about taking his advice, but finally concluded to run the risk of being drowned; and with nothing on but a shirt and a pair of trowsers, I plunged into the sea and swam for the shore, where I arrived without injury, but nearly exhausted from fatigue and fear, not a little augmented



"I plunged into the sea and swam for the shore." P. 34.

by the sound of the bullets that whistled around my head while in the water. In dread of pursuit, I ran into a corn-field, and finding my wet clothes an incumbrance, I stripped them off and ran with all speed through the field.

At a little distance in advance of me I could discover a number of men, whom I soon found to be our ship's crew, who had landed before me. My appearance among them in a state of entire nakedness excited not a little mirth. "Holloa! my boy," exclaimed one of them, "you cut a pretty figure; not from the garden of Eden, I can swear for it, for you have not even an apron of fig-leaves to cover you with; you were not born to be drowned, I see, though you may live to be hanged." But after a few jests at my expense, the mate took off one of the two shirts, with which he had taken the precaution to provide himself before he left the vessel, and gave it to me. This garment answered all the purposes of a covering, as it effectually covered my person from my shoulders to my feet. After travelling about half of a mile, we came to a house,

where the good woman, taking pity on my grotesque and unique condition, gave me a decent suit of clothes.

I immediately proceeded to Providence, where I arrived the same day, and lost no time before visiting my good aunt, although I had great doubts and fears of the reception I should meet with. She was glad to see me again, but did not lose the opportunity of giving me a long lecture upon the folly of my conduct in leaving home; and appealed to my candor to acknowledge the justice of her reproof, by comparing my present condition with what it formerly was. The anxiety and distress of my parents, too, were described to me in all the eloquence of female affection, as an additional inducement to return to them.

The misfortunes I had thus far experienced, she alleged, I ought to consider as judgments against any more attempts to be separated from my friends; and concluded with advising me, in the kindest manner, to return home, and with many generous offers to assist me and to produce a reconciliation, should her assistance be found necessary.

I felt conscious that the result of this voyage did not fill my mouth with arguments in favor of a second. I went away tolerably well clothed, and returned *stark* naked, but I could not however see the force of her reasoning, nor make a proper application of it to my circumstances.

The minds of the old and the young are differently constituted, and their modes of thinking, and the train of reasoning they pursue are entirely dissimilar. The former consider actions in connexion with their consequences, and look to the future good or evil that may arise; while the latter regard only present prospect, and are unmindful of future events and reckless of the future calamities to which they may be exposed. Youth rush into danger and are heedless of it; while the aged, warned by experience, turn aside and avoid it. Finding me obstinately resolved upon undertaking another voyage, to obtain, as I thought, some remuneration for the misfortunes experienced in the first, my aunt showed a disposition to assist me as readily as before;

and I was soon comfortably fitted out for a second expedition.

Four days after my arrival in Providence, I fortunately met with a ship-master, named Thomas, and engaged in his employ for a voyage to Cape François, the port to which I sailed on my former voyage. We had a short passage, and arrived at our destined port without anything having transpired worthy of notice during the voyage.

We took in a cargo similar to the one we received on my former voyage, and set sail for Providence, where we arrived after a pleasant passage of eighteen or twenty days. I worked on board the vessel several days, assisting to unload her, and then received my wages, which had been stipulated at four dollars per month.

With my money in my pocket, the largest sum I ever before possessed, and much elated with my success, I visited my good aunt once more, who received me with much joy. She assisted me with her advice in purchasing some articles of clothing, that I might make a respectable appearance among my friends.

I now thought I could consistently return to my native place; and was willing to comply with the desire of my aunt and my own inclinations, to visit my parents, who, I knew, must have suffered much anxiety at my absence, a wanderer they knew not where, at a time when the country was in such a state of commotion as to render it somewhat hazardous for a youth like me to be without a guide or protector.

After securing my clothing in a small pack, I slung it on my back, and started on foot for home, from which I had been absent about six months. This was the latter part of November, 1775.

My finances being rather low, after deducting the expense of my clothing, I found it necessary to exercise economy on my journey, and not indulge myself in entertainment at public houses. I found a ready welcome at the dwellings of the farmers on the road, and was treated with an abundance of bread and milk without compensation. I was hospitably received at a respectable farm-house the first night on my journey; and on the second, arrived at the

American camp in Roxbury, on Saturday evening. Ascertaining that my parents had, during my absence, removed to Dorchester, a distance of about three miles, I felt too much fatigued to seek their residence that night, and found comfortable accommodations in one of the barracks.

Early on Sunday morning I started for Dorchester, and soon, to my great joy and satisfaction, found my parents in the enjoyment of good health, excepting my father, who was afflicted with a bad cold and was lying asleep on the bed when I entered the house. My good mother gazed at me with the amazement of one who had seen a spectre. She had long before given up all hopes of ever seeing me again, having heard nothing respecting me during my absence; and, as she was well aware of my inclination for a sailor's life, she had concluded that I had gone to sea, and that, in her estimation, was equivalent to being lost.*

*It may appear surprising to the reader that my aunt at Providence had not informed my parents respecting my movements. To say nothing of the fact, that she did not possess the pen of a ready writer, there were no regular means for conveying information in those days. Mails and post-offices, now so common, were then unknown. Situated as my aunt

As soon as she had recovered from the shock caused by my sudden and unexpected appearance, and recovered her self-possession, she aroused my father with a scream of joy and the exclamation "Our son is returned!" The disposition of my father was more equable than that of my mother, and his feelings were less excitable than hers; consequently he exhibited less astonishment at sight of me, though he felt as much pleasure on the occasion. Neither had he yielded to those fears for my safety which had taken possession of my mother's mind; or else he had endeavored to conceal his apprehensions in order to pacify hers; constantly encouraging her with the hope that I "should, no doubt, be taken care of."

My mother was about commencing an endless train of questions respecting my adventures, but, intimating that I was hungry, having had no breakfast, she postponed the gratification of her curiosity to attend to my animal wants.

was, she could have but little access to travellers, and being very domestic in her habits, she was seldom out of the house of her employer.

While impatiently watching the progress of my mother in her culinary operations, my father, with much gravity and solemnity of manner, addressed me as follows:—"My son, I am much surprised and grieved that you should have left home in the manner you did, without giving us any means to ascertain your fate, or what your intentions were. If you had any cause for complaint, and thought yourself ill-treated, why did you not inform me, and I would have seen justice done?" With the sense of wrongs, either real or imaginary, still rankling in my breast, I replied that I had done so, repeatedly, but no attention had been paid to my complaints; and that I had often told my mother that I intended to go forth into the world for the purpose of improving my condition. "Since you have been preserved from any serious disaster," continued my father, "and no evil consequences have resulted from the imprudent steps you have taken, I hope you will abandon all such schemes in future. You can remain at home until you are old enough to learn a trade, and then choose one for yourself.

At this time my father found abundance of employment in working at his trade for the soldiers in the American camp. During the winter I improved the time in attending a school, and making myself useful in various ways to my parents. I often visited the American camp, and endeavored by conversing with the soldiers to ascertain what plans were formed for their future operations. My father having a large family to maintain by his industry, I felt unwilling to remain at home, a burden upon him, and was desirous of supporting myself. My brother James, who was two years older than myself, had likewise been at home during the preceding winter; and it was thought expedient that both of us should learn some useful trade.

CHAPTER III.

UNINTERRUPTED intercourse being now established between the country and the town, my brother and myself were sent into Boston to choose our trades and seek our employers. James found a situation in the bakery of Mr. Edward Tuckerman,* in the south part of the town, as an apprentice upon probation; and I found employment in the shop of Mr. John Bosson, a barber and manufacturer of wigs, upon the same conditions.

After we had been in these situations long enough for all parties to be satisfied, we were bound by my father in regular form as apprentices.

The trade of a barber in those days was very different from what it now is. My principal employment was in the preparation of hair for the purposes of wigs, crape-

*Father of the late Rev. Dr. Tuckerman, who was distinguished for his benevolence and philanthropy.

cushions, &c.; being occasionally allowed to scrape the face of some transient customer, who might be reasonably expected never to call again for a repetition of the operation.

In Mr. Bosson's service I continued until I was sixteen years old, and made laudable progress in the mysteries of his art.

The war at this time was fiercely maintained between the United States and Great Britain; and as soldiers were wanted, a draught was made upon the militia of Massachusetts for a quota of men to march to New York, to reinforce the American army then in the vicinity of that city. My master was unfortunately among the number draughted for that service. As he did not possess a great degree of military spirit, he was much distressed at the demand thus suddenly made upon his patriotism. One day, while my fellow-apprentice and myself were at work, Mr. Bosson entered the shop laboring under great agitation of mind. It was evident that something had happened to discompose his temper, which was naturally somewhat irritable. He walked rapidly about, occasionally stopping, and honing

several razors that he had put in perfect order previous to his going out; and attempting to sharpen a pair of shears that at the time bore the keenest edge; he furnished us with much food for conjecture as to the cause of his strange conduct. At length, from various ejaculations, and now and then a half-smothered curse upon his ill luck, we gathered the fact, that he was enrolled among the soldiers who were soon to take up the line of march for New York. This was an unfortunate business for him; a reality he had not anticipated. The idea of shouldering a musket, buckling on a knapsack, leaving his quiet family, and marching several hundred miles for the good of his country, never took a place in his mind. Although a firm friend to his country, and willing to do all he could to help along her cause, as far as expressing favorable opinions and good wishes availed, yet there was an essential difference in his mind between the theory and the art of war; between acting the soldier, and triumphing at the soldier's success.

The reality of his position operated as a

safety-valve to let off the steam of his patriotism, and to leave him in a state of languor well calculated to produce in him a degree of resignation for remaining at home. But what was to be done? A substitute could not be obtained for the glory that might be acquired in the service; and as for money, no hopes could be entertained of raising sufficient for the purpose. Mr. Bosson continued to fidget about, uttering such expressions as his excited feelings prompted, allowing us to catch a disconnected sentence, such as: "Hard times——don't need two apprentices any more than a toad needs a tail;"——"if either of you had the spunk of a louse, you would offer to go for me." With this last remark he quit the shop apparently in high dudgeon.

The truth was now evident, that he wanted somebody to take his place.

To provide ways and means of payment was the principal obstacle in the way of hiring a substitute. Gold and silver had scarcely a physical existence in the country, and the want of a circulating medium was attempted to be supplied by the legislative

acts of government in issuing an excessive quantity of paper money, which, as it never had any intrinsic value, soon degenerated from its nominal worth with progressive rapidity. From 1777 to 1781 the state of the money was so fluctuating that no certain calculation could be made of its value; for it was not two days at a time of the same value. The depreciation continued, till prudent people declined taking it at any rate; and they, who did, received it at a depreciation of several hundreds for one. While such a state of things continued, all kinds of business was prostrate. The laborer, though "worthy of his hire," could not obtain anything for it. Patriotism, more than a love of gain, prompted men to join the army. More were willing to enlist voluntarily than to serve in the capacity of substitutes for an uncertain compensation. My master, therefore, had but little hope of finding any one willing to serve in his stead.

The spirit of adventure had been suppressed, but not destroyed, within me. The monotonous duties of the shop grew irksome, and I longed for some employment produc-

tive of variety. The opportunity seemed favorable to my desires; and, as my elder fellow-apprentice was fearful that he might be called upon, he encouraged me in the project, and I resolved upon offering my services.

Mr. Bosson accepted my proposition to act as his substitute with a great degree of satisfaction and gratitude, which he evinced by a liberal supply of clothing and equipments for the service. He did not suffer my zeal to cool, but immediately gave directions to have me enrolled and enlisted for three months, in a company commanded by Capt. William Bird of Boston, in a regiment under Colonel Proctor.

Early in the month of September, 1779, being not quite sixteen, the age required at that time for the militia service, our company was paraded on Boston common, and with a heavy knapsack on my back, and a gun on my shoulder, superior in weight to those carried by soldiers at the present time, we took up the line of march.

We halted at Roxbury to take under our protection six baggage wagons of ammuni-

tion, and commenced our march for Peekskill, in the state of New York.

During our march, several little events transpired, which serve to show to what losses and vexations the inhabitants of a country are exposed when troops are moving through their territories. One afternoon some geese were discovered enjoying themselves in a pond near the road; and one of the soldiers, thinking that a little poultry would not be an unacceptable addition to our bill of fare, threw a stone among them and killed one of the largest of the flock.

The prize was secured and concealed by taking off the head of a drum and putting the goose into it, and then restoring the instrument to its former appearance. The owner of the poultry followed and complained the commanding officer of this depredation on his property. We halted long enough to have the wagons searched, but the goose was not found; and we were allowed to march on. When the camp fires were kindled at night, the goose was roasted, our captain did not hesitate to eat a wing, and a piece of the breast with

troubling us with any questions respecting our right of possession.

A few days subsequent to this event, we halted one evening, after a tiresome day's march, at a well-provided farming establishment belonging to an old Quaker. Permission was asked to allow us to lodge in some of his spacious barns, but the old man would not give his consent, alleging that his principles were opposed to the spirit of war, and that he could not aid those who were engaged in mortal contests. We urged him to consider our fatigue, our wants, and the perils to which we were exposed for the good of the country; but these appeals produced no change in his purpose. Finding that solicitation and entreaty were vain, we changed our tone, and peremptorily demanded accommodations. As refusal would have been useless to men tired and hungry as we were, and possessing the physical force to exact compliance, he reluctantly consented to our sleeping in an old building, that seemed to have been erected for some mechanical purpose. This was all we could obtain, for he refused to sell us bread, or milk, or any

eatable; and even to permit our commander to lodge in his house.

Such inhospitable treatment was rare in those days. The wants of the soldiers, the defenders of their country, were generally cheerfully supplied; and they, who were not engaged in active service, were willing to contribute all in their power to the comfort and sustenance of the soldier.

In the building, to which we were admitted, we found a large kettle or boiler, which we filled with water, and made a fire under it. Late at night a party was sent out to search the premises and to seize whatever could be found capable of being converted to our benefit, or of contributing to our physical wants.

In an orchard belonging to the Quaker a large number of fowls were found quietly roosting upon the trees, little dreaming of the murderous attack about to be made upon them. Between thirty and forty were captured, to whom no quarters were given, and brought into the camp. The feathers were quickly plucked, and the bodies were scalded in the kettle. Afterwards they

were stowed away in our knapsacks, and a party sufficient to carry the plunder were sent on in advance.

We started early the next morning, and, after a march of about fifteen miles, we overtook the party in advance with the half-cooked poultry. The inhospitable spirit, manifested by the Quaker, was the cause of a much greater loss to him than he would have suffered, had he shown a disposition to afford us some trifling accommodations.

We halted at a farm house, and, having borrowed a large brass kettle, emptied the contents of the knapsacks into it, combining therewith a goodly quantity of onions, potatoes, and carrots, and soon converted the heterogeneous mass into what we called a chicken soup, which, though it might not have been very palatable to an epicure, was not to be despised by a company of hungry soldiers.

After a fatiguing march of five or six days, we arrived at Peek-Kill, and delivered to the commander there our wagons of ammunition, and then marched to Albany.

While we remained at Albany, we were

quartered in what was then called the "old French fort." We remained here about six weeks, when, General Washington having changed his plan of operations, and abandoned his design of attacking New York, and our services being no longer needed, we were discharged, to get home in the best way we could.

When we left Boston, each of us received three thousand dollars in Continental money; of the value of which the reader may have already formed some idea, and it had not risen since our departure, for we found on our return that from one hundred to one hundred and fifty dollars of it were required for a simple repast. In addition to this compensation, our monthly pay was forty shillings, in the same valuable currency. My clothes were much worn and damaged in the service, and upon our return were found in a very shabby condition, especially my shoes. Of these I had two pairs, but the good judgment of a thief was shown by stealing the better pair one night while I was asleep, leaving me no other alternative but to go barefoot, or secure the remaining

ones to my feet by winding rope-yarn around them in the form of bandages.

My feet were covered with blisters while I marched over the frozen ground and snow; and thus, almost crippled, and worn down with fatigue, I arrived at my father's in Roxbury, whither he had returned, after an absence of about two months.

After resting a few days at home, and recovering my strength and spirits, I returned to Mr. Bosson, abundantly satisfied with the specimen I had experienced of a soldier's life, assuring him that nothing would again induce me to officiate as a substitute for him or anybody else.

CHAPTER IV.

I CONTINUED to perform my duties in the shop, and was contented with my employment till I was 'about seventeen years of age, when a spirit of roving once more got possession of me; and I expressed a desire to go to sea. The condition of the country was at this time distressing; and, as my master had not more business than he and one apprentice could perform, he expressed a willingness to consent, upon condition that he should receive one half of my wages and the same proportion of whatever prize money might fall to my share.

Our coast was lined with British cruisers, which had almost annihilated our commerce; and the state of Massachusetts judged it expedient to build a government vessel, rated as a twenty-gun ship, named the "Protector," commanded by Captain John Foster Williams. She was to be fitted out for service as soon as possible, to pro-

tect our commerce, and to annoy the enemy. A rendezvous was established for recruits at the head of Hancock's wharf, where the national flag, then bearing thirteen stripes and stars, was hoisted. All means were resorted to, which ingenuity could devise, to induce men to enlist. A recruiting officer, bearing a flag and attended by a band of martial music, paraded the streets, to excite a thirst for glory and a spirit of military ambition.

The recruiting officer possessed the qualifications requisite to make the service appear alluring, especially to the young. He was a jovial, good-natured fellow, of ready wit and much broad humor. Crowds followed in his wake when he marched the streets; and he occasionally stopped at the corners to harangue the multitude, in order to excite their patriotism and zeal for the cause of liberty.

When he espied any large boys among the idle crowd around him, he would attract their attention by singing in a comical manner the following doggerel :

"All you that have bad masters,
And cannot get your due ;
Come, come, my brave boys,
And join with our ship's crew."

A shout and a huzza would follow, and some would join in the ranks. My excitable feelings were roused ; I repaired to the rendezvous, signed the ship's papers, mounted a cockade, and was in my own estimation already more than half of a sailor. The ship was as yet far from being supplied with her complement of men ; and the recruiting business went on slowly. Appeals continued to be made to the patriotism of every young man to lend his aid, by his exertions on sea or land, to free his country from the common enemy. Promises of gain were held out, which set truth at defiance, and offers the most tempting that the impoverished state of the finances of government could promise. About the last of February the ship was ready to receive her crew, and was hauled off into channel, that the sailors might have no opportunity to run away after they were got on board.

Upwards of three hundred and thirty men

were carried, dragged, and driven on board, of all kinds, ages, and descriptions, in all the various stages of intoxication; from that of "sober tipsiness" to beastly drunkenness, with the uproar and clamor that may be more easily imagined than described. Such a motley group has never been seen since Falstaff's ragged regiment paraded the streets of Coventry.

The wind being fair, we weighed anchor and dropped down to Nantasket roads, where we lay till about the first of April; and then set sail for a cruise of six months. Our course was first directly eastward; and, while keeping along the coast, we espied two English ships of war, each carrying sixteen or eighteen guns. We immediately gave chase; but to our surprise and regret they avoided an engagement, and made all sail from us. In consequence of having coppered bottoms, the sloops were better sailers than our ship, which was not coppered, and they made their escape. Their conduct was inexplicable to us, as each, without coöperation, was of force sufficient to be a match for us; and both, act-

ing in concert, might have given us cause to repent, had we come in contact with them.

We continued to cruise along the coast for a few weeks, without meeting with any of the enemy, when, some indications of tempestuous weather appearing, our captain judged it expedient to steer for the banks of Newfoundland, that he might have more sea room in case of a gale. We arrived off the banks, where we cruised for nearly eight weeks, most of the time in a dense fog, without meeting with friend or foe.

On the morning of June 9th, 1780, the fog began to clear away; and the man at the mast-head gave notice that he saw a ship to the westward of us. As the fog cleared up, we perceived her to be a large ship under English colors to the windward, standing athwart our starboard bow. Our relative position gave us an opportunity to escape, but our valiant captain did not see fit to avail himself of it.

As she came down upon us, she appeared as large as a seventy-four; and we were

not deceived respecting her size, for it afterwards proved that she was an old East-Indiaman, of eleven-hundred tons burden, fitted out as a letter-of-marque for the West-India trade, mounted with thirty-two guns, and furnished with a complement of one hundred and fifty men. She was called the Admiral Duff, commanded by Richard Strang, from St. Christopher* and St. Eustatia, laden with sugar and tobacco, and bound to London. I was standing near our first lieutenant, Mr. Little, who was calmly examining the enemy, as she approached, with his spy-glass, when Captain Williams stepped up and asked his opinion of her. The lieutenant applied the glass to his eye again and took a deliberate look in silence, and replied, "I think she is a heavy ship, and that we shall have some hard fighting; but of one thing I am certain, she is not a frigate; if she were, she would not keep yawing, and showing her broadsides as she does; she would show nothing but her head and stern; we shall have the advan-

* Commonly called St. Kitts.

tage of her, and the quicker we get alongside the better." Our captain ordered English colors to be hoisted, and the ship to be cleared for action. The shrill pipe of the boatswain summoned all hands to their duty. The bedding and hammocks of the sailors were brought up from between decks; the bedding placed in the hammocks, and lashed up in the nettings; our courses hauled up; the top-gallant sails clewed down; and every preparation was made, which a skilful officer could suggest, or active sailors perform.

The enemy approached till within musket shot of us. The two ships were so near to each other that we could distinguish the officers from the men; and I particularly noticed the captain on the gang-way, a noble-looking man, having a large gold-laced cocked hat on his head, and a speaking-trumpet in his hand. Lieutenant Little possessed a powerful voice, and he was directed to hail the enemy; at the same time the quarter-master was ordered to stand ready to haul down the English flag and to hoist up the American. Our lieutenant

took his station on the after part of the starboard gangway, and, elevating the trumpet, exclaimed, "Hallo! whence come you?"—"From Jamaica, bound to London," was the answer. "What is the ship's name?" inquired the lieutenant. "The Admiral Duff," was the reply.

The English captain then thought it his turn to interrogate, and asked the name of our ship. Lieutenant Little, in order to gain time, put the trumpet to his ear, pretending not to hear the question. During the short interval, thus gained, Captain Williams called upon the gunner to ascertain how many guns could be brought to bear upon the enemy. "Five," was the answer. "Then fire, and shift the colors," were the orders. The cannons poured forth their deadly contents, and, with the first flash, the American flag took the place of the British ensign at our mast-head.

The compliment was returned in the form of a full broad-side, and the action commenced. I was stationed on the edge of the quarter-deck, to sponge and load a six-pounder; this position gave me a fine

opportunity to see the whole action. Broad-sides were exchanged with great rapidity for nearly an hour; our fire, as we afterwards ascertained, produced a terrible slaughter among the enemy, while our loss was as yet trifling.*

I happened to be looking for a moment towards the main deck, when a large shot came through our ship's side and killed Mr.

* After these pages were written, I ascertained that Mr. Frederick Lane, of Boston, a relative of Captain John Foster Williams, had in his possession the original log-book of the ship Protector. Mr. Lane had the politeness to send it to me, and I have made the following extracts verbatim from one of its pages.

"June 9th, 1780.

"At 7 A. M. saw a ship to the Westward, we stood for her under English Colors, the Ship standing athaught us, under English Colours, appeared to be a large ship. At 11 came along side of her, hailed her, she answered from Jamaica. I shifted my colours and gave her a Broadside, she soon returned us another, the action was very heavy for near three Glasses, when she took fire and blew up—got out the Boats to save the men, took up 55 of them, the greatest part of them wounded with our shot and Burnt when the ship Blew up, she was called the Adml. Duff of 32 Guns, Comman'd by Richard Strang from St. Kitts and Estatia, Ladened with Sugar and Tobacco bound to London. We Lost in the action one man, Mr. Benja. Scollay and 5 wounded. Rec'd several Shot in our Hull, and several of our shrouds and stays shot away."

Benjamin Scollay, a very promising young man, who was, I think, a midshipman. At this moment a shot from one of our marines killed the man at the wheel of the enemy's ship, and, his place not being immediately supplied, she was brought alongside of us in such a manner as to bring her bowsprit directly across our forecastle. Not knowing the cause of this movement, we supposed it to be the intention of the enemy to board us. Our boarders were ordered to be ready with their pikes to resist any such attempt, while our guns on the main deck were sending death and destruction among the crew of the enemy. Their principal object now seemed to be to get liberated from us, and by cutting away some of their rigging, they were soon clear, and at the distance of a pistol shot.

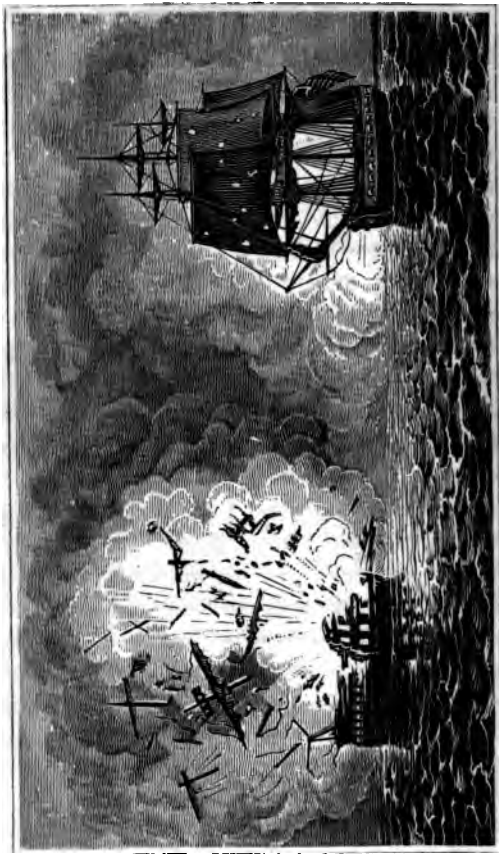
The action was then renewed, with additional fury; broadside for broadside continued with unabated vigor; at times so near to each other that the muzzles of our guns came almost in contact, then again at such a distance as to allow of taking deliberate aim. The contest was obstinately

continued by the enemy, although we could perceive that great havoc was made among them, and that it was with much difficulty that their men were compelled to remain at their quarters.

A charge of grape-shot came in at one of our port-holes, which dangerously wounded four or five of our men, among whom was our third lieutenant, Mr. Little, brother to the first. His life was despaired of, but by the kind attention he received from his brother, and the surgeon, he finally recovered, though he bore evidence of the severity of his wounds through life.

While Captain Williams was walking the quarter deck, which he did during the whole action, a shot from the enemy struck the speaking trumpet from his hand and sent it to a considerable distance from him. He picked it up with great calmness of manner, and resumed his walk, without appearing to have been at all disturbed by the circumstance.

The battle still continued with unabated vigor on both sides, till our marksmen had killed or wounded all the men in the fore,



"The whole stern was blown off and her valuable cargo emptied into the sea." P. 87.

main, and mizen tops of the enemy. The action had now lasted about an hour and a half, and the fire from the enemy began to slacken, when we suddenly discovered that all the sails on her mainmast were enveloped in a blaze. The fire spread with amazing rapidity, and, running down the after-rigging, it soon communicated with her magazine, when her whole stern was blown off, and her valuable cargo emptied into the sea. All feelings of hostility now ceased, and those of pity were excited in our breasts for the miserable crew that survived the catastrophe.

Our enemy's ship was now a complete wreck, though she still floated, and the survivors were endeavoring to save themselves in the only boat that had escaped the general destruction. The humanity of our captain urged him to make all possible exertion to save the miserable, wounded, and burnt wretches, who were struggling for their lives in the water. The ship of the enemy was greatly our superior in size, and lay much higher out of the water.

Our boats had been much exposed to his

fire, as they were placed on spars between the fore and main masts during the action, and had suffered considerable damage. The carpenters were ordered to repair them with the utmost expedition, and we got them out in season to take up fifty-five men, the greater part of whom had been wounded by our shot or burned when the powder magazine exploded. These men exhibited a spectacle truly heart-rending to behold. Their limbs were mutilated by all manner of wounds, while some were burned to such a degree that the skin was nearly flayed from their bodies. Our surgeon and his assistants had just completed the task of dressing the wounds of our own crew, and then they directed their attention to the wounded of the enemy. Several of them suffered the amputation of their limbs, and the wounds of the others were treated in a skilful manner, and every attention was paid to them which our circumstances would allow. Five of them died of their wounds, and were committed to their watery graves. From the survivors we learned, that the British commander had frequently expressed a

desire to come in contact with a "Yankee frigate," during his voyage, that he might have a prize to carry to London. Poor fellow! he little thought of losing his ship and his life in an engagement with a ship so much inferior to his own — with an enemy upon whom he looked with so much contempt.

We ascertained that the loss of the enemy was prodigious, compared with ours. This disparity however will not appear so remarkable, when it is considered that, although their ship was larger than ours, it was not so well supplied with men; having no marines to use the musket, they fought with their guns alone, and, as their ship lay much higher out of the water than ours, the greater part of their shot went over us, cutting our rigging and sails, without injuring our men. We had about seventy marines, who did great execution with their muskets, picking off the officers and men with a sure and deliberate aim.

After the action was over, I found that I was so deaf, as to cause me to fear that I had totally lost the sense of hearing. I

attributed this to the noise of the cannon, which I had been employed in loading and sponging for such a period of time. It was nearly a week before my hearing was restored, and then but partially; and, ever since, I have experienced great inconvenience from this deafness.

In all our naval engagements, both in the revolutionary war and the subsequent one, there has been a great inequality of loss among the contending parties. The history of our naval actions offers abundant testimony to corroborate the truth of this statement. Its cause, to me, is inexplicable.

Our sailors were busily employed in picking up the various articles that were floating, and getting them on board, while the carpenters and riggers were engaged in repairing the damages we had received. The ship was soon in good order and prepared again to meet the enemy, and we continued on our cruise.

The weather growing warm, sails were suspended between the decks, for the purpose of ventilating and purifying the atmos-

phers by their motion; but little benefit resulted from the experiment.

Our captain, finding that sickness was increasing among the crew, and that the wounded were suffering greatly, judged it expedient to leave our cruising ground, and to steer for some eastern port, that we might obtain a supply of wood and water.

Some repairs likewise were necessary, which we could not conveniently make at sea, previous to a short cruise which our captain intended we should make before our return to Boston.

About the twentieth of the month we sailed from the banks of Newfoundland, and arrived at Broad bay in seven or eight days. Having found a good harbor, we dropped anchor, and made immediate preparations to get our sick and wounded men on shore. Captain Williams made a contract with a farmer, who was friendly to the American cause, in comfortable circumstances, having good buildings, to provide for the sick and wounded, and to furnish accommodations for our surgeon's mate,

who was left on shore with medicines and other things proper for a hospital.

There was now a constant communication kept up between the ship and the shore, and it was necessary for our officers to exercise great vigilance to protect the property of our friendly farmer from depredation. An attempt on the part of some of our crew to steal from him was detected in a singular manner.

A copper-colored fellow, half Indian and half negro, had seen a fatted calf in the farmer's barn, which he coveted to such a degree as to induce him to make a desperate attempt to make it a prize. The graceless rascal found another of the crew, whose appetite for veal overcame what little moral sense he possessed, ready to second him in the undertaking.

Late at night, after all hands had retired, Cramps, for that was the name of the principal adventurer, took a boat, went on shore, secured the calf, and returned to the ship without discovery. He came with great caution under the ship's bows, and hailed his fellow-worker in iniquity, whom he ex-

pected to find ready with a rope to hoist the calf on board.

It so happened that, just at this time, our first lieutenant, Mr. Little, had occasion to come on deck, and the fellow, who had been watching for the arrival of Cramps, dodged out of sight and secreted himself. Cramps, mistaking the lieutenant for his coadjutor, hailed him in a low tone, requesting him to lower a rope as quick as possible. The lieutenant, suspecting some mischief, did as he was directed.

Cramps soon fixed a noose round the calf's neck, and then cried out, "Now haul away, blast your eyes! my back is almost broke with carrying the creature so far down to the boat." The lieutenant obeyed, and a strong pull on his part, with some boosting by Cramps in the rear, soon brought the animal upon deck. Cramps immediately followed his prize, and found, to his no small consternation, not only the calf, but himself in the powerful grasp of the lieutenant. The calf was alive and uninjured, although Cramps had carried him a considerable distance from the barn to the

boat, and came very near choking him when hoisting him up the side of the ship.

The calf enjoyed more comfortable quarters that night than his captor; for the latter was handcuffed, and secured below for farther punishment the next day. In the morning, the calf and the culprit were sent on shore, and, when landed, Cramps was ordered to shoulder the calf and march to the farmer, confess, and ask his forgiveness; and then to return on board with the consolation that he should receive fifty lashes for his fault, and the assurance that he should be hung at the yard-arm if he was detected in such an undertaking again.

The result of this expedition proved Cramps to be the greater calf of the two.

The fifty lashes were remitted at the solicitation of the kind-hearted farmer.

CHAPTER V.

Our repairs being completed, and all things ready for sea, we weighed anchor about the last of June, and steered once more for the banks of Newfoundland, where we cruised three or four weeks, without meeting anything excepting a brig from the West Indies bound to Boston, commanded by Capt. Thomas Parker. The provisions of the ship beginning to fail, and no prospect of making captures appearing, our captain, with the advice of his officers, concluded to steer for Boston. We hove to, and caught a considerable quantity of cod-fish, then directed our course for Halifax, off which we cruised for several days.

At noon of the fourth day after our arrival, the man on the look-out at the mast-head gave notice of a sail on our larboard quarter.

Mr. Little ascended to the mizen top to examine the object of the sailor's report with

his spy-glass. He ascertained to his satisfaction that the strange sail was a ship directing her course towards us. All hands were piped on deck; the ship was put about, and we made sail for the strange sail. The two ships approached each other rapidly; and it was soon evident to our officers that she was a frigate of large burthen. We afterwards ascertained that these conjectures were true, as she was a frigate from Halifax bound to New York.

Captain Williams thought it would be imprudent to risk an action with an enemy so much his superior in force; he therefore gave orders to put the ship about, and crowd all sail, that we might get from the enemy as fast as possible. The enemy gained upon us rapidly, as she was fresh from port, and her bottom coppered; while ours, not having any copper, was extremely foul, in consequence of our long cruise, and our progress was greatly retarded.

At five o'clock in the evening, the enemy had approached so near as to give us several salutes with her bow guns, which compliment we did not hesitate to return with tw

eighteen pounders from our cabin windows, and a couple of sixes from the quarter deck. An eighteen pound shot was lodged in our main mast; this was all the damage we received. We resorted to all the usual methods to increase our progress, such as wetting the sails, shifting the position of the guns, &c., not forgetting to make all the use we could of our stern chases, lest the enemy might think we slighted the compliments they sent us from the bow guns.

About sun-set, the enemy rounded to, and gave us two broadsides, by way of parting; for which we paid due acknowledgments from our cabin windows and quarter-deck, and she gave up the chase. For this last act of courtesy we felt more grateful than for any she had shown us; and we immediately got our guns into their proper places, and everything in readiness for an action which we anticipated having the next morning.

We continued to crowd sail all night, and the next morning could just discern the enemy at a great distance, steering in an opposite direction.

We thought at the time we were fortunate in escaping; but we afterwards felt some regret that we had avoided an action; for, although she was a six-and-thirty-gun frigate, she was poorly manned, and was bound to New York to complete her number of men; and the result of an action would probably have been in our favor. Had she been fully manned, she would have persevered in the chase, and we should probably have been taken, as many of our men were sick.

In a few days we came in sight of Boston lighthouse and anchored in Nantasket roads, where we remained a short time, then stood up the harbor, and hauled in at Hancock's wharf. The sails were unbent, the sick landed, the ship unloaded, and all hands, who were not disposed to enlist for a second cruise, were paid off and discharged.

Thus ended my first cruise in the Protector. And, although I had not added to my wealth, I had gained some knowledge of a sailor's life, and felt disposed to try my fortune a little more in the like manner by enlisting for a second voyage.

During the short interval between my first and second cruise, while I was at home, my father was taken sick and died. The loss of a kind parent is, under any circumstances, a melancholy bereavement, and this was particularly so to my mother and her eight children, some of whom were very young.

Though unwilling to leave her in her affliction, I felt the necessity of exerting myself, that I might contribute something to the maintenance of the family, who were left very destitute. I knew of no way in which there was a prospect of my being so useful to them, as that of engaging for another cruise.

A rendezvous was opened; a recruiting party paraded the streets under the American flag, accompanied by a band of martial music, and the excitement usual on such occasions. Amid loud huzzas for liberty and independence, sailors fell rapidly into our ranks, and our complement of men was obtained in a short time.

In the mean time our ship was thoroughly overhauled, her bottom scraped, rigging re-

paired, and everything was done to put her into perfect order. Wood and water, and various kinds of stores necessary for a cruise of six months, were taken on board; and, having recruited about two hundred men, preparations were made for our immediate departure.

About the last of October, our boats were hoisted on deck and secured, and we dropped down into Nantasket roads, where we remained a few days, and then set sail upon our second cruise. We cleared Cape Cod the first of November; directed our course for Halifax, off which we cruised a few days, then steered for the Grand Banks. We arrived there, and cruised about for three weeks, and, not discovering any of the enemy's vessels, we directed our course to the West Indies, and arrived off the islands, where we cruised for some time.

Finding it necessary to obtain a supply of water, we put into St. Pierre, in the island of Martinico, for that purpose; after which we steered towards Dominica, an island north of Martinico. The next morning we espied an English sloop sailing to leeward

of us close under the land. We gave chase, and soon came up with her. Our captain sent an officer and some men on board, and took possession of her.

We then bore away with our prize for St. Juan,* in the island of Porto Rico, where our captain disposed of the sloop and cargo, part of which consisted of fourteen Negroes, who were sold to the Spaniards.

We then continued our cruise; and in a few days fell in with an English schooner, which we took; putting some men and a prize-master on board, ordered her for Boston, where she arrived in safety.

After cruising for some time, and not falling in with anything, our captain concluded to leave the West India seas and steer for the southern coast of the United States.

We arrived off the bar of Charleston, South Carolina; and in the course of a few days fell in with a ship called the Polly, a letter-of-marque, of twenty guns, bound to London. We gave chase late in the afternoon, and, as it soon grew dark, we lost sight of her.

* Commonly called St. John.

A thunder storm came on, and all hands were watching for her; and by the flashes of the lightning we at length discovered her, standing in a different direction from what we had at first seen her pursuing. We accordingly shifted our course, and crowded sail in pursuit. By the aid of the lightning, we kept in her course, and soon came up with her.

"What ship is that, and where from?" roared our lieutenant through his trumpet, in a voice that bore no slight resemblance to the thunder which rolled above our heads. "The ship Polly, from Charleston, bound to London," was the reply. The lightning, flashing upon her colors, showed that they were English; while the enemy had the same means of seeing the American flag flying at our mast-head.

We were completely prepared for action; the matches were lighted; the lanterns burning fore and aft; and all anxiously waiting for the commands of the officers. One shot was fired, and our captain ordered the enemy to "Haul down his colors, or he would blow him out of the water."

The appearance of our ship being formidable, our captain's demand was instantly complied with. Our boat was lowered, and a prize-master and crew put on board, who took possession of the ship, and she was ordered for Boston.

Shortly after, we steered for New York, and arrived off Sandy Hook in the spring. After cruising here nearly a week, one morning the man at mast-head cried out, "A sail upon the larboard quarter." Mr. Little ascended to the top, and, after examining her with his glass, declared her to be a brig standing in for New York. We immediately gave chase, came up with her, and ordered her to heave to till we could send a boat alongside. She complied, and, taking her crew on board of our ship, put a prize-master and crew on board of the brig, and ordered her for Boston.

While we were manning the prize, the man at the mast-head gave notice of "A sail on the larboard bows."

We lost no time in commencing the pursuit, and soon came alongside of her.

She proved to be a schooner going into

New York. We took from her a quantity of bread, cheese, and porter.

Captain Williams held consultation with his officers respecting what course it was best to pursue; and they came to the conclusion, that it would not be prudent to remain any longer cruising off Sandy Hook, lest we should meet some of the British frigates, of too great force for us to contend with. Our prizes being in sight, signals were made for them to approach. The brig we took in tow and ordered the schooner to keep in company. We now made sail for Boston, with a fair wind, and anticipated the pleasure of sharing a considerable sum of prize money on our arrival.

CHAPTER VI.

Our cruise thus far had been prosperous, and we thought the "evil day was afar off." We continued merrily on our course, without seeing friend or foe, during the next day; but, the following morning, the man at the mast-head cried out, "Two sail to the leeward." Mr. Little ascended to the main top with his glass, and soon ascertained that they were two large ships, closely hauled upon the wind, in full chase of us. The brig we had in tow was quickly cast off, and she and the schooner were ordered to make the best progress they could. Our yards were braced, and all sail crowded that the ship could carry.

The chase continued, without gaining much upon us till about noon, when, the wind shifting, they fell into our wake, and gained upon us very fast.

A few days previous to this, we had fallen in with a brig from Havana for Boston,

commanded by Captain Cunningham, having a large quantity of specie on board.

Captain C., thinking that the money would be more safe on board of an armed ship, requested it as a favor of Captain Williams to receive it on board. Captain Cunningham arrived with his brig in safety; but, to his regret as well as ours, his money fell into the hands of the enemy.


The ships in pursuit showed French colors, while we had the American flag flying.

They appeared to gain upon us, and the prospect was, that they would soon overtake us.

Our captain, calling all the hands aft on the quarter deck, expressed his opinion, that the ships in pursuit of us were English, and that we should be captured.

He then distributed among us the money which he had received for safe keeping, in sums of fifteen dollars to each, upon condition that it should be returned to him if we were so fortunate as to escape.

It was now nearly sun-set, and the enemy were gaining upon us rapidly. They had



exchanged their French for English colors, thus ending our hopes and doubts respecting their character. Our capture was now considered no longer problematical; and, being unwilling that the stores, especially of crackers, cheese, and porter, should fall a prey to the appetite of the enemy, and not knowing when we should have an opportunity of enjoying such luxuries again, I invited about a dozen of my friends into the store room, where we exerted ourselves to diminish the quantity of this part of the prize which we thought would shortly be in possession of the enemy. The porter made us cheerful if not happy, and having eat and drank to our satisfaction, we shook hands as friends soon to part, uncertain when we should meet again, and returned on deck without our absence having been noticed.

We found that the two ships had got up with us. They proved to be the *Roe-Buck*, a forty-gun ship with a double deck, and the *May-Day*, of twenty-eight guns.

They had been upon the look-out for us for three or four weeks; having received information from the Tories in Boston that

we were expected to return from our cruise about this time.

The Roe-Buck took her station on our larboard quarter, the May-Day on our larboard bow, and sent an eighteen-pound shot over our quarter deck. We were then ordered to strike our colors, or a broadside would be sent to enforce compliance with the demand.

To attempt resistance against a force so much our superior would have been unjustifiable; and the flag of thirteen stars and stripes, under which we had sailed with much satisfaction and success, was reluctantly pulled down; and this was the unfortunate end of our second cruise.

The boats of the enemy were manned, and sent alongside of our ship. Our crew were now permitted by our officers to collect their clothing and their little property together, and secure them in the best manner they could.

By this time, the boats had arrived along side, and the enemy had ascended the deck.

Their first exploit was to strike or kick every sailor that came in their way, bestow-

ing a variety of opprobrious epithets, among which "damned rebels" was of the most frequent recurrence; then they commenced searching in every part of the ship for articles of value.

Our crew were ordered to pass down the side of the ship into the enemy's boats; but were forbidden to carry anything with them. Some of our crew fastened their bedding upon their backs, and tumbled themselves head foremost down into the boats; and, as it was quite dark, they would unperceived get into the cuddy with their bedding, trusting to future circumstances for opportunity to use or secrete it.

We arrived alongside, and were ordered on to the quarter deck of our captors. Some English sailor among our crew, to recommend himself to the favor of the British captain, had given information respecting the money we had secreted about our persons. The sergeant of arms was ordered to search every one of us till the sum of fifteen dollars was found upon each of us.

Such was the art which some had exercised in hiding the money, that they were

stripped entirely naked before it was found. One fellow had secreted his share so effectually, that it baffled all the searching operations to find it; and the officer, being confident that the fellow had it about him, took the satisfaction of giving him a tremendous kick in the rear by way of conclusion, roaring out at the same time, "Away with you, you damned rebel,* into the hold."

In the capacity of cabin steward† I was most of the time in the cabin, and had recommended myself to the favorable notice of the American captain by performing my duties to his satisfaction: and, when the money was distributed among our crew, the captain gave me a double share. I put fifteen dollars in the crown of my hat, which I pressed down upon my head as closely as possible; the remaining fifteen I placed in my shoes, between the soles.

* My apology for occasionally repeating such profane expressions is, that the young readers may know to what insulting and contemptuous language their forefathers were exposed while contending with a haughty foe, for liberty and independence.

† Soon after we had commenced our cruise, I was called upon to officiate as cabin steward in the place of one who had performed his duties in a manner unsatisfactory to the captain.

At length my turn to be searched came; and I, as the rest of my fellow-prisoners had done, denied having any money. This assertion, however, did not avail; I was seized by the collar, and shaken so violently that my hat fell off, and the dollars rolled out upon the deck. The sum of fifteen dollars being found, it was concluded that I had no more, and I was sent into the ship's hold, where I found those of the crew who had been previously searched. A considerable number of us contrived, by various stratagems, to save our money, for dollars were found to be quite plentiful among us for some time after our capture; and they proved a great convenience, as money generally does among friends or foes.

Our accommodations in the hold were not very desirable, especially to those who had not succeeded in getting their bedding into that place. We found nothing to lie upon softer than the ship's ballast, consisting of stones of all shapes and sizes, with here and there a lump of pig iron by way of variety; and the water casks, which afforded a surface rather uneven for the comfort and convenience of our weary limbs.

Here we spent the first night, and were not allowed to go on deck till the next morning.

The Roe-Buck had the charge of the prisoners, while the May-Day was sent in pursuit of the two prizes we had in possession at the time of our capture.

Greatly to our satisfaction, however, she was unable to overhaul them, and they both arrived in safety in Boston a few days after.

CHAPTER VII.

SHORTLY after, we anchored off Sandy Hook, and preparations were made to examine the prisoners, to ascertain what part of them were Englishmen; or rather, who among them would carry the appearance of able-bodied seamen.

We were called up from the hold; ordered to the larboard side of the quarter deck; thence marched, in single file, past a number of British officers on the starboard side; after that to the gangway, and down again into the hold. The object of thus moving in procession before the officers was, to give them an opportunity to select such as they chose, to serve on board of their ships. With fear and trembling we passed through this examination. Whenever a healthy, athletic-looking man passed by, he was hailed, and accused of being an Englishman. In vain would his comrades attest to the fact of his being a native-born American; tell the place of his birth and the circum-

stances of his youth, detailed with all the consistency and connexion which belong to truth; it was all to no purpose. Sailors they wanted, and have them they would, if they set law and gospel at defiance. In this manner was many an American citizen, in the morning of life, dragged from his country, his friends, and his home; forced on board a ship of war; compelled to fight against his own country; and, if he lived, to fight in battle with other nations, against whom he had no feelings of hostility. Many a one spent his whole life in foreign service, far from his native land, while his relatives were ignorant of his fate, till, worn out with toil and wounds, a shadow of his former self, he dropped into the grave unpitied and unknown.

About a third part of our ship's crew were taken on board of their vessels, to serve in the capacity of sailors, without regarding their remonstrances; while the remainder of us were put on board of a wood coaster, to be conveyed on board the noted prison ship called the "Jersey." The idea of being incarcerated in this floating Pandemonium filled us with horror; but the idea we had

formed of its horrors fell far short of the realities which we afterwards experienced. We wished, if possible, to avoid the hard fate that awaited us; and conceived the design of rising upon the guard, and seizing upon the sloop, and running her aground upon the Jersey shore. The plan could have been easily executed had there been any one among us to act as a leader in the enterprise. Our captain with his officers were confined in the cabin, under the watchful care of a number of British officers well armed; while a guard of soldiers stood at the head of the companion way, to prevent any communication with the prisoners upon the deck. Sailors and soldiers have the courage to execute, but not the skill to plan.


Had our captain, in whom we had been in the habit of placing the utmost confidence, been with us, I have no doubt we should have obtained our freedom.

As the deck was loaded with wood, we could in a moment have obtained weapons sufficient for our purpose, and, had any one amongst us been disposed to act as a leader, we should soon have had possession of the

vessel. We afterwards regretted exceedingly that we did not make the attempt.

We proceeded slowly up the river towards our much-dreaded place of confinement, and at doubling a point we came in sight of the gloomy-looking hulk of the old Jersey, aptly named by the sailors, "The hell afloat." The Jersey was originally a seventy-four gun ship, and, at the commencement of the American revolution, being found in a state of decay and unfit for service at sea, she was dismantled, moored in the East-river at New York, and used as a store-ship. In the year 1780, she was converted into a prison-ship, and continued to be used for that purpose during the remainder of the war.

In consequence of the fears that were entertained that the sickness, which prevailed among the prisoners, might spread to the shore, she was removed, and moored with chain cables at the Wallabout, a lonely and unfrequented place on the shore of Long Island. Her external appearance was forbidding and gloomy. She was dismantled; her only spars were the bowsprit; a derrick, that looked like a gallows, for hoisting supplies on board; and a flag-staff at the stern.



The port-holes were closed and secured. Two tiers of holes were cut through her sides, about two feet square and about ten feet apart, strongly guarded by a grating of iron bars.

Such was the appearance of the Jersey, as we approached it; an appearance well calculated to excite the most gloomy forebodings of the treatment we should receive after we should have become its inmates. The idea of being a prisoner in such a place was sufficient to fill the mind with grief and distress. The heart sickened, the cheek grew pale with the thought. Our destiny was before us, and there was no alternative but to submit.

The sloop anchored at a little distance from the Jersey, and two boats were sent alongside to receive us.

The boats passed and re-passed several times before all of us got on board; and lastly the captain's barge was sent to convey our officers to their place of confinement. Not a great while after we were imprisoned our captain, together with the lieutenant and the sailing-master, Mr. Lemon, were sent to

England; the latter, being an Englishman, had the comfortable assurance, that he should be hanged as soon as he arrived.*

*How long our officers remained in England I have no means for information. Captain Williams I found in Boston when I returned.

On the adoption of the federal constitution by Massachusetts, February, 1788, the event was celebrated in Boston by a civic procession, in which, I believe, the great mass of the citizens participated, classed into trades and occupations. Each profession or art on this occasion was headed by appropriate flags and banners, bearing its respective coat of arms and emblems, accompanied in most cases with implements of agricultural, manufacturing, and mechanical industry and skill in full operation. Among the most conspicuous of these, the mariners had mounted a ship on wheels, which was drawn through the streets by 13 white horses, the then number of the United States. The ship was manned by veteran sea-captains and weather-beaten sailors, throwing the lead, reefing the sails, waving the thirteen stripes and stars, and at intervals firing salutes from a 3-pounder, under the command of John Foster Williams, our late captain, who, as I have heard, stood on the quarter deck with a speaking-trumpet in his hand, dressed in continental regimentals. A song, to the tune of "Yankee Doodle," appeared among other poetical productions in the newspapers of the day, one verse of which was in these words:—

" John Foster Williams in a ship,
Join'd with the social band, sir,
And made the lasses dance and skip,
To see him sail on land, sir.
Yankee doodle," &c.

I believe it was at this time, whilst the procession was passing through High street, between Summer street and Federal street, (till then called Long lane,) the ship was interrupted

After being detained in the boats alongside a little while, we were ordered to ascend to the upper deck of the prison ship. Here our names were registered, and the capacity in which we had served previous to our capture. Each of us was permitted to retain whatever clothing and bedding we had brought, after having been examined to ascertain that they contained no weapons nor money; and then we were directed to pass through a strong door, on the starboard side, down a ladder leading to the main hatchway. I now found myself in a loathsome prison, among a collection of the most wretched and disgusting looking objects that I ever beheld in human form.

Here was a motley crew, covered with rags and filth; visages pallid with disease, emaciated with hunger and anxiety, and retaining hardly a trace of their original

and entangled by a tree in the street, which was finally cut down to give free passage to the tars in their novel vehicle.

Captain Williams was appointed by Gen. Washington to the command of a revenue cutter in 1790, which office he held to the time of his death.

He was distinguished for his courage, prudence, and humanity, and rendered his country good and faithful service.

He died in Williams street, Boston, June 24th, 1814, aged 71.

appearance. Here were men, who had once enjoyed life while riding over the mountain wave or roaming through pleasant fields, full of health and vigor, now shriveled by a scanty and unwholesome diet, ghastly with inhaling an impure atmosphere, exposed to contagion, in contact with disease, and surrounded with the horrors of sickness and death. Here, thought I, must I linger out the morning of my life, in tedious days and sleepless nights, enduring a weary and degrading captivity, till death shall terminate my sufferings, and no friend will know of my departure. A prisoner on board of "the old Jersey!" The very thought was appalling. I could hardly realize my situation.

The first thing we found it necessary to do after our captivity was to form ourselves into small parties, called "messes," consisting of six men each; as, previous to doing this, we could obtain no food. All the prisoners were obliged to fast on the first day of their arrival; and seldom on the second could they procure any food in season for cooking it. No matter how hungry they were, no deviation from the rules of

the ship was permitted. All the prisoners fared alike; officers and sailors received the same treatment on board of this old hulk. Our keepers were no respecters of persons. We were all "rebels." The quantity and quality of our fare was the same for all. The only distinction known among us was made by the prisoners themselves, which was shown in allowing those, who had been officers previous to their capture, to congregate in the extreme after-part of the ship, and to keep it exclusively to themselves as their places of abode.

The various messes of the prisoners were numbered; and nine in the morning was the hour when the steward would deliver from the window in his room, at the after-part of the ship, the allowance granted to each mess. Each mess chose one of their company to be prepared to answer to their number when it was called by the steward, and to receive the allowance as it was handed from the window. Whatever was thrust out must be taken; no change could be made in its quantity or quality. Each mess received daily what was equivalent in

weight or measure, but not in quality, to the rations of four men at full allowance: that is, each prisoner received two thirds as much as was allowed to a seaman in the British navy.

Our bill of fare was as follows:

On Sunday, one pound of biscuit, one pound of pork, and half a pint of peas. Monday, one pound of biscuit, one pint of oat-meal, and two ounces of butter. Tuesday, one pound of biscuit, and two pounds of salt beef. Wednesday, one and a half pounds of flour, and two ounces of suet. Thursday was a repetition of Sunday's fare, Friday of Monday's, and Saturday of Tuesday's.

If this food had been of a good quality and properly cooked, as we had no labor to perform, it would have kept us comfortable, at least from suffering. But this was not the case. All our food appeared to be damaged.

The bread was mouldy, and filled with worms. It required considerable rapping upon the deck before the worms could be dislodged from their lurking places in a *biscuit*.


As for the pork, we were cheated out of it more than half of the time: and, when it was obtained, one would have judged from its motley hues, exhibiting the consistence and appearance of variegated fancy soap, that it was the flesh of the porpoise, or sea-hog, and had been an inhabitant of the ocean rather than of the sty. But, whatever doubts might arise respecting the genera or species of the beast, the flavor of the flesh was so unsavory that it would have been rejected as unfit for the stuffing even of Bologna sausages.

The peas were generally damaged, and, from the imperfect manner in which they were cooked, were about as indigestible as grape-shot. The butter the reader will not suppose was the real "Goshen;" and had it not been for its adhesive properties to retain together the particles of the biscuit, that had been so riddled by the worms as to lose all their attraction of cohesion, we should have considered it no desirable addition to our viands.

The flour and the oat-meal were often sour, and when the suet was mixed with it, we should have considered it a blessing to

have been destitute of the sense of smelling before we admitted it into our mouths: it might be nosed half the length of the ship.

And last, though not the least item among our staples in the eating line—our beef. The first view of it would excite an idea of veneration for its antiquity, and not a little curiosity to ascertain to what kind of an animal it originally belonged. Its color was of dark mahogany; and its solidity would have set the keen edge of a broad-axe at defiance to cut across the grain, though, like oakum, it could be pulled into pieces one way in strings, like rope-yarn. A streak of fat in it would have been a phenomenon, that would have brought all the prisoners together to see and admire. It was so completely saturated with salt, that, after having been boiled in water taken from the sea, it was found to be considerably freshened by the process. It was no uncommon thing to find it extremely tender; but then this peculiarity was not owing to its being a prime cut from a premium ox, but rather owing to its long keeping—the vicissitudes of heat and cold, of humidity and aridity it had *experienced* in the course of time: and of



this disposition to tenderness we were duly apprized by the extraordinary fragrance it emitted before and after it was cooked. It required more skill than we possessed to determine whether the flesh, which we were obliged to devour, had once covered the bones of some luckless bull that had died from starvation; or of some worn-out horse that had been killed for the crime of having outlived his usefulness.

Such was our food. But the quality of it was not all that we had reason to complain of. The manner in which it was cooked was more injurious to our health, than the quality of the food; and, in many cases, laid the foundation of diseases, that brought many a sufferer to his grave, years after his liberation.

The cooking for the prisoners was done in a great copper vessel, that contained between two and three hogsheads of water, set in brick work. The form of it was square, and it was divided into two compartments by a partition. In one of these, the peas and oat-meal were boiled; this was done in fresh water: in the other, the meat was

boiled in salt water, taken up from along-side of the ship.

The Jersey, from her size and lying near the shore, was imbedded in the mud; and I do not recollect seeing her afloat during the whole time I was a prisoner.* All the filth that accumulated among upwards of a thousand men was daily thrown overboard, and would remain there till carried away by the tide. The impurity of the water may be easily conceived; and in this water our meat was boiled.

It will be recollected, too, that the water was salt, which caused the inside of the copper to become corroded to such a degree that it was lined with a coat of verdigris. Meat thus cooked must in some degree be poisoned; and the effects of it were manifest in the cadaverous countenances of the emaciated beings, who had remained on board for any length of time.

The persons, chosen by each mess to receive their portions of food, were summoned by the cook's bell to receive their allowance, and, when it had remained in the boiler a

*The tides in New York do not generally rise or fall above two or three feet.

certain time, the bell would again sound, and the allowance must be immediately taken away: whether it was sufficiently cooked, or not, it could remain no longer. The food was generally very imperfectly cooked; yet this sustenance, wretched as it was, and deficient in quantity, was greedily devoured by the half-starved prisoners.

No vegetables were allowed us. Many times since, when I have seen in the country, a large kettle of potatoes and pumpkins steaming over the fire to satisfy the appetites of a farmer's swine, I have thought of our destitute and starved condition, and what a luxury we should have considered the contents of that kettle on board the Jersey.

The prisoners were confined in the two main decks below. The lowest dungeon was inhabited by those prisoners who were foreigners, and whose treatment was more severe than that of the Americans.

The inhabitants of this lower region were the most miserable and disgusting-looking objects that can be conceived. Daily washing with salt water, together with their extreme emaciation, caused their skin to appear like dried parchment. Many of

them remained unwashed for weeks; their hair long and matted, and filled with vermin; their beards never cut, excepting occasionally with a pair of shears, which did not improve their comeliness, though it might add to their comfort. Their clothes were mere rags, secured to their bodies in every way that ingenuity could devise.

Many of these men had been in this lamentable condition for two years, part of the time on board other prison-ships; and, having given up all hope of ever being exchanged, had become resigned to their situation. These men were foreigners, whose whole lives had been one continual scene of toil, hardship, and suffering. Their feelings were blunted, their dispositions soured; they had no sympathies for the world; no home to mourn for; no friends to lament for their fate.

But far different was the condition of the most numerous class of the prisoners, composed mostly of young men from New England, fresh from home.

They had reason to deplore the sudden change in their condition. The thoughts of home, of parents, brothers, sisters, and

friends, would crowd upon their minds; and, "brooding on what they had been, and what they were, their desire for home became a madness." The dismal and disgusting scene around; the wretched objects continually in sight, and "hope deferred, which maketh the heart sick," produced a state of melancholy, that often ended in death—the death of a broken heart.

"O ye! who, sunk in beds of down,
Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate,
Whom friends and fortune quite disown.
Ill-satisfied keen nature's clam'rous call,
Stretched on his straw, he lays himself to sleep. . . .
Think on the dungeon's grim confine,
Where guilt and poor misfortune pine. . . .
The wretch, already crushed low
By cruel fortune's undeserved blow."

In the morning, the prisoners were permitted to ascend the upper deck, to spend the day, till ordered below at sunset. A certain number, who were for the time called the "working party," performed in rotation the duty of bringing up hammocks and bedding for airing, likewise the sick and infirm, and the bodies of those who had died during the night: of these there were generally a

number every morning. After these services, it was their duty to wash the decks. Our beds and clothing were allowed to remain on deck till we were ordered below for the night; this was of considerable benefit, as it gave some of the vermin an opportunity to migrate from the quarters they had inhabited.

About two hours before sunset, orders were given to the prisoners to carry all their things below; but we were permitted to remain above till we retired for the night into our unhealthy and crowded dungeons. At sunset, our ears were saluted with the insulting and hateful sound from our keepers, of "Down, rebels, down," and we were hurried below, the hatchways fastened over us, and we were left to pass the night amid the accumulated horrors of sighs and groans, of foul vapor, a nauseous and putrid atmosphere, in a stifled and almost suffocating heat. The tiers of holes through the sides of the ship were strongly grated, but not provided with glass; and it was considered a privilege to sleep near one of these apertures in hot weather for the pure air that passed in at them. But little sleep, however,

could be enjoyed even there; for the vermin were so horribly abundant, that all the personal cleanliness we could practise would not protect us from their attacks, or prevent their effecting a lodgment upon us.

When any of the prisoners died in the night, their bodies were brought to the upper deck in the morning, and placed upon the gratings. If the deceased had owned a blanket, any prisoner might sew it around the corpse, and then it was lowered with a rope, tied round the middle, down the side of the ship into a boat. Some of the prisoners were allowed to go on shore, under a guard, to perform the labor of interment. Having arrived on shore, they found in a small hut some tools for digging, and a hand-barrow on which the body was conveyed to the place for burial.

Here in a bank near the Wallabout, a hole was excavated in the sand, in which the body was put, and then slightly covered; the guard not giving time sufficient to perform this melancholy service in a faithful manner. Many bodies would, in a few days after this mockery of a burial, be exposed nearly bare by the action of the elements.

**"By feeble hands their shallow graves were made;
No stone, memorial of their corpses, laid.
In barren sands, and far from home, they lie,
No friend to shed a tear when passing by;
O'er the mean tombs insulting foemen tread;
Spurn at the sand, and curse the rebel dead."**

This was the last resting place of many a son and a brother; young and noble-spirited men, who had left their happy homes and kind friends to offer their lives in the service of their country; but they little thought of such a termination to their active career; they had not expected to waste their energies in this dreadful prison.

Poor fellows! they suffered more than their older companions in misery. They could not endure the hopeless and wearisome captivity; to live on from day to day, denied the power of doing anything; condemned to that irksome and heart-sickening of all situations, utter inactivity; their restless and impetuous spirits, like caged lions, panted to be free, and the conflict was too much for endurance, enfeebled and worn out as they were with suffering and confinement.

**"Denied the comforts of a dying bed,
With not a pillow to support the head;
How could they else but pine, and grieve and sigh,
Detest that wretched life, and wish to die?"**

It was a painful task for the prisoners to carry, to this unconsecrated burial place, the bodies of those who had been their companions for months perhaps, and who were endeared to them by their love for the same glorious cause, and the same feeling of resentment towards their unmanly oppressors.

The fate of many of these unhappy victims must have remained forever unknown to their friends; for, in so large a number, no exact account could be kept of those who died, and they rested in a nameless grave; while those, who performed the last sad rites, were hurried away before their task was half completed, and forbidden to express their horror and indignation at this insulting negligence toward the dead.

But the emotions, thus suppressed, only glowed the more intensely within their bosoms, and contributed as much as any other cause to keep alive the hatred and animosity toward their enemies.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE regular crew of the Jersey consisted of a captain, two mates, a steward, a cook, and about a dozen sailors. There was likewise on board a guard of ten or twelve old invalid marines, who were unfit for active service; and a guard of about thirty soldiers, from the different regiments quartered on Long Island, who were relieved by a fresh party every week.

The physical force of the prisoners was sufficient at any time to take possession of the ship; but the difficulty was, to dispose of themselves after a successful attempt. Long Island was in possession of the British, and the inhabitants were favorable to the British cause. To leave the ship, and land upon the island, would be followed by almost certain detection; and the miseries of our captivity would be increased by additional cruelties heaped upon us from *the vindictive feelings of our oppressors.*

Yet, small as was the chance for succeed-

ing in the undertaking, the attempt to escape was often made, and in not a few instances with success.

Our sufferings were so intolerable, that we felt it to be our duty to expose ourselves to almost any risk to obtain our liberty. To remain on board of the prison ship seemed to be certain death, and in its most horrid form; to be killed, while endeavoring to get away, could be no worse.

American prisoners are proverbial for their ingenuity in devising ways and means to accomplish their plans, whether they be devised for their own comfort and benefit, or for the purpose of annoying and tormenting their keepers.

Although we were guarded with vigilance, yet there did not appear much system in the management of the prisoners; for we frequently missed a whole "mess" from our number, while their disappearance was not noticed by our keepers. Occasionally a few would be brought back, who had been found in the woods upon Long Island, and taken up by the "Tories."

Our mess one day noticed, that the mess *that occupied the place next to them were*

among the missing. This circumstance led to much conjecture and inquiry respecting the manner in which they had effected their escape. By watching the movements of our neighbors, we soon found out the process necessary to be adopted. Any plan, which a mess had formed, they kept a secret among their number, in order to insure a greater prospect of success. In this way, we were kept ignorant for a long time of the manner in which the undertaking was accomplished.

For the convenience of the officers of the prison ship, a closet, called the "round house," had been constructed under the forecastle, the door of which was kept locked. This room was seldom used, there being other conveniences in the ship preferable to it.

Some of the prisoners had contrived to pick the lock of the door; and, as it was not discovered, the door remained unfastened.

After we had missed our neighboring prisoners, and had ascertained to our satisfaction their mode of operation, the members of our mess determined to seize the first opportunity offered to attempt our escape. We

selected a day, about the fifteenth of August, and made all the preparations in our power for ensuring us success in our undertaking.

At sun-set, when the usual cry from the officer of the guard, "Down, rebels, down," was heard, instead of following the multitude down the hatchways, our mess, consisting of six, all Americans, succeeded in getting into the "round house," excepting one. The round house was found too small to contain more than five; and the sixth man, whose name, I think, was Putnam, of Boston, concealed himself under a large tub, that happened to be lying near the place of our confinement.

The situation of the five, as closely packed in the "round house" as we could stand and breathe, was so uncomfortable as to make us very desirous of vacating it as soon as possible.

We remained thus cooped up, hardly daring to breathe, for fear that we should be heard by the guard. The prisoners were all below, and no noise was heard above, saving the tramp of the guard as he paced the deck.

It was customary, after the prisoners were secured below, for the ship's mate every

night to search above: this, however, was considered a mere form, and the duty was very imperfectly executed. While we were anxiously waiting for the completion of this service, an event transpired, that we little anticipated, and which led to our detection.

One of the prisoners, an Irishman, had made his arrangements to escape the same evening, and had not communicated with any one on the subject, excepting a countryman of his, whom he persuaded to bury him up in the coal-hole, near the fore-castle. Whether his friend covered him faithfully or not, or whether the Irishman thought that if he could not see anybody, nobody could see him, or whether, feeling uncomfortable in his position, he turned over to relieve himself, I know not; but, when the mate looked into the coal-hole, he espied something rather whiter than the coal, which he soon ascertained to be the Irishman's shoulder. This discovery made the officer suspicious, and induced him to make a more thorough search than usual. We heard the uproar that followed the discovery, and the threats of the mate that he "would search every hole and corner." He

soon arrived at the round house, and we heard him ask a soldier for the key. Our hopes and expectations were a little raised, when we heard the soldier reply, "There is no need of searching this place, for the door is kept constantly locked." But the mate was not to be diverted from his purpose, and ordered the soldier to get the key.

During the absence of the soldier, we had a little time to reflect upon the dangers of our situation; crowded together in a space so small as not to admit of motion, with no other protection than the thickness of a board; guarded on the outside by about a dozen soldiers, armed with cutlasses; and the mate, considerably drunk, with a pistol in each hand, threatening to fire through, every moment, our feelings may be more easily conceived than described. There was but little time for deliberation; something must be immediately done. We knew, that, as soon as we should be compelled to quit our hiding-place, our destination would be the quarter-deck for the night; the luxury of sleeping below would not be granted to prisoners detected in the heinous crime of attempting their escape.

In a whispering consultation of a few moments, we concluded that the safest course we could pursue would be to break out with all the violence we could exercise, overcome every obstacle, and reach the quarter-deck. By this time, the soldier had arrived with the key, and upon applying it the door was found to be unlocked. We now heard our last summons from the mate, with imprecations too horrid to repeat, and threatening us with instant destruction if we did not immediately come out.

To remain any longer where we were would have been certain death to some of us; we therefore carried our hastily-formed plan into operation. The door opened outwards, and, forming ourselves into a solid body, we burst open the door, rushed out pell-mell, and, making a brisk use of our fists, knocked the guard heels over head in all directions, at the same time running with all possible speed for the quarter-deck. As I rushed out, being in the rear, I received a wound from a cutlass on my side, the scar of which remains to this day.

As nearly all the guard were prostrated by our unexpected sally, we arrived at our



"We burst open the door and rushed out pell-mell." P. 120.

destined place, without being pursued by anything but curses and threats.

The mate exercised his authority to protect us from the rage of the soldiers who were in pursuit of us as soon as they had recovered from the prostration into which they had involuntarily been thrown; and, with the assistance of the captain's mistress, whom the noise had brought upon deck, and whose sympathy was excited when she saw we were about to be murdered: she placed herself between us and the enraged guard, and made such an outcry as to bring the captain up, who ordered the guard to take their station at a certain distance and watch us narrowly. We were all put in irons, our feet being fastened to a long bar, a guard placed over us, and in this manner we were left to spend the night.

During the time of the transactions related, our fellow-prisoner, Putnam, remained quiet under the tub, and heard the noise around his hiding-place. He was not suffered to remain long in suspense. A soldier lifted up the tub, and, seeing the poor prisoner, thrust his bayonet into his body just

above his hip, and then drove him to the quarter-deck to take his station in irons among us. The blood flowed profusely from his wound, and he was soon after sent on board of the hospital ship, and we never heard anything respecting him afterwards.

With disappointed expectations, we passed a dreary night. A cold fog, followed by rain, came on; to which we were exposed, without any blankets or covering to protect us from the inclemency of the weather. Our sufferings of mind and body during that horrible night exceeded any that I have ever experienced. We were chilled almost to death, and the only way we could preserve heat enough in our bodies to prevent our perishing was to lie upon each other by turns. Morning at length came, and we were released from our fetters. Our limbs were so stiff that we could hardly stand. Our fellow-prisoners assisted us below, and, wrapping us in blankets, we were at length restored to a state of comparative comfort.

For attempting to escape we were punished by having our miserable allowance *reduced* one third in quantity for a month;

and we had found the whole of it hardly sufficient to sustain life. This diminution in our fare was the only variety we experienced in our monotonous lives for several weeks.

One day a boat came alongside, containing about sixty firkins of grease, which they called butter. The prisoners were always ready to assist in the performance of any labor necessary to be done on board of the ship, as it afforded some little relief to the tedious monotony of their lives. On this occasion, they were ready to assist in hoisting the butter on board. The firkins were first deposited upon the deck, and then lowered down the main hatchway. Some of the prisoners, who were the most officious in giving their assistance, contrived to secrete a firkin, by rolling it forward under the fore-castle, and afterwards carrying it below in their bedding.

This was considered as quite a wind-fall; and, being divided among a few of us, proved a considerable luxury. It helped to fill up the pores in our mouldy bread, when the worms were dislodged, and gave to the crumbling particles a little more consistence.

Several weeks after our unsuccessful attempt to escape, another one, attended with better success, was made by a number of the prisoners. At sunset the prisoners were driven below, and the main hatchway was closed. In this there was a small trap-door, large enough for a man to pass through, and a sentinel was placed over it with orders to permit but one prisoner at a time to come up during the night.

The plan that had been formed was this : one of the prisoners should ascend, and dispose of the sentinel in such a manner that he should be no obstacle in the way of those who were to follow.

Among the soldiers was an Irishman, who, in consequence of having a head of hair remarkable for its curly appearance, and withal a very crabbed disposition, had been nicknamed "Billy the Ram." He was the sentry on deck this night, for one was deemed sufficient, as the prisoners were considered secure when they were below, having no other place of egress saving the trap-door, over which the sentinel was stationed. Late in the night, one of the prisoners, a bold, athletic fellow, ascended upon deck,

and in an artful manner engaged the attention of "Billy the Ram," in conversation respecting the war; lamenting that he had ever engaged in so unnatural a contest; expressing his intention of enlisting in the British service; and requesting Billy's advice as to the course necessary to be pursued to obtain the confidence of the officers.

Billy happened to be in a mood to take some interest in his views, and showed an inclination, quite uncommon for him, to prolong the conversation. Unsuspicious of any evil design on the part of the prisoner, and while leaning carelessly on his gun, "Billy" received a tremendous blow from the fist of his entertainer, on the back of his head, which brought him to the deck in a state of insensibility. As soon as he was heard to fall by those below, who were anxiously waiting the result of the friendly conversation of their pioneer with "Billy," and were satisfied that the final knock-down argument had been given; they began to ascend, and, one after another, to jump overboard, to the amount of about thirty.

The noise aroused the guard, who came upon deck, where they found "Billy," not sufficiently recovered from the stunning effects of the blow he had received, to give any account of the transaction. A noise was heard in the water; but it was so dark that no object could be distinguished. The attention of the guard, however, was directed to certain spots, which exhibited a luminous appearance, which salt water is known to assume in the night when it is agitated; and to these appearances they directed their fire, and, getting out the boats, picked up about half of the number that attempted to escape, many of whom were wounded, though no one was killed. The rest escaped.

During the uproar overhead, the prisoners below encouraged the fugitives and expressed their approbation of their proceedings in three hearty cheers; for which gratification we suffered our usual punishment—a short allowance of our already short and miserable fare.

For about a fortnight after this transaction, it would have been a hazardous experiment to approach near to "Billy the

Ram," and it was a long time before we ventured to speak to him, and finally to obtain from him an account of the events of that evening.

Not long after this, another successful attempt to escape was made, which for its boldness is perhaps unparalleled in the history of such transactions.

One pleasant morning about ten o'clock, a boat came alongside, containing a number of gentlemen from New-York, who came for the purpose of gratifying themselves with a sight of the miserable tenants of the prison-ship: influenced by the same kind of curiosity that induces some people to travel a great distance to witness an execution.

The boat, which was a beautiful yawl, and sat like a swan upon the water, was manned by four oarsmen, with a man at the helm. Considerable attention and respect was shown to the visitors, the ship's side being manned when they showed their intention of coming on board, and the usual naval courtesies extended. The gentlemen were soon on board; and the crew of the yawl, having secured her to the fore-chains

on the larboard side of the ship, were permitted to ascend the deck.

A soldier as usual was pacing with a slow and measured tread the whole length of the deck, wheeling round with military precision when he arrived at the end of his walk; and, whether upon this occasion any one interested in his movements had secretly slipped a guinea into his hand, not to *quicken*, but to retard his progress, was never known; but it was evident to the prisoners that he had never occupied so much time before in measuring the distance with his back to the place where the yawl was fastened. At this time, there were sitting in the forecastle, apparently admiring the beautiful appearance of the yawl, four mates and a captain, who had been brought on board as prisoners a few days previous, taken in some vessel from a southern port.

As soon as the sentry had passed these men, in his straightforward march, they in a very quiet manner lowered themselves down into the yawl, cut the rope, and the four mates taking in hand the oars, while the captain managed the helm, in less time than I have taken to describe it, they were



"They plied the oars with such vigor that every stroke they took, seemed to take the boat out of the water." P. 129.

under full sweep from the ship. They plied the oars with such vigor, that every stroke they took seemed to take the boat out of the water. In the mean time, the sentry heard nothing and saw nothing of this transaction, till he had arrived at the end of his march, when, in wheeling slowly round, he could no longer affect ignorance, or avoid seeing that the boat was several times its length from the ship. He immediately fired; but, whether he exercised his best skill as a marksman, or whether it was on account of the boat going ahead its whole length at every pull of the rowers, I could never exactly ascertain: but the ball fell harmless into the water. The report of the gun brought the whole guard out, who blazed away at the fugitives, without producing any diminution in the rapidity of their progress.

By this time, the officers of the ship were on deck with their visitors; and, while all were gazing with astonishment at the boldness and effrontery of the achievement, and the guard were firing as fast as they could load their guns, the captain in the yawl left the helm, and, standing erect in the stern,

with his back to the Jersey, bending his body to a right angle, he exhibited the broadest part of himself to their view, and with a significant gesture directed their attention to it as a proper target for the exercise of their skill. This contemptuous defiance caused our captain to swell with rage; and when the prisoners gave three cheers to the yawl's crew as expressive of their joy at their success, he ordered all of us to be driven below at the point of the bayonet, and there we were confined the remainder of the day. These five men escaped, greatly to the mortification of the captain and officers of the prison-ship. After this, as long as I remained a prisoner, whenever any visitors came on board, all the prisoners were driven below, where they were obliged to remain till the company had departed.

CHAPTER IX.

THE miseries of our condition were continually increasing : the pestilence on board spread rapidly, and every day added to our bill of mortality. The young, in a particular manner, were its most frequent victims. The number of the prisoners was continually increasing, notwithstanding the frequent and successful attempts to escape : and when we were mustered and called upon to answer to our names, and it was ascertained that nearly two hundred had mysteriously disappeared without leaving any information of their departure, the officers of the ship endeavored to make amends for their past remissness by increasing the rigor of our confinement, and depriving us of all hope of adopting any of the means for liberating ourselves from our cruel thralldom, so successfully practised by many of our comrades.

With the hope that some relief might be obtained to meliorate the wretchedness of

our situation, the prisoners petitioned Gen. Clinton, commanding the British forces in New-York, for permission to send a memorial to General Washington, describing our condition, and requesting his influence in our behalf, that some exchange of prisoners might be effected.

Permission was obtained, and the memorial was sent. In a few days, an answer was received from Gen. Washington, containing expressions full of interest and sympathy, but declaring his inability to do anything for our relief by way of exchange, as his authority did not extend to the marine department of the service, and that soldiers could not consistently be exchanged for sailors. He declared his intention, however, to lay our memorial before Congress, and that no exertion should be spared by him to mitigate our sufferings.

Gen. Washington at the same time sent letters to Gen. Clinton, and to the British Commissary of Prisoners, in which he remonstrated against their cruel treatment of the American prisoners, and threatened, if our situation was not made more tolerable, to retaliate by placing British prisoners in

circumstances as rigorous and uncomfortable as were our own: that "with what measure they meted, the same should be measured to them again."

We experienced after this some little improvement in our food, but no relaxation in the severity of our confinement. The interposition of Divine Providence, or removal from our loathsome prison, seemed the only preservative from the pestilence which "walked in darkness and destroyed at noon-day."

The long detention of American sailors on board of British prison-ships was to be attributed to the little pains that were taken by our countrymen to retain British subjects, who were taken prisoners on the ocean during the war. Our privateers captured many British seamen; who, when willing to enlist in our service, as was generally the case, were received on board of our ships. Those, who were brought into port, were suffered to go at large; for, in the impoverished condition of the country, no state or town was willing to subject itself to the expense of maintaining prisoners in a state of

confinement: they were permitted to provide for themselves. In this way, the number of British seamen was too small for a regular and equal exchange. Thus the British seamen, after their capture, enjoyed the blessings of liberty, the light of the sun, and the purity of the atmosphere, while the poor American sailors were compelled to drag out a miserable existence amid want and distress, famine and pestilence. As every principle of justice and humanity was disregarded by the British in the treatment of their prisoners, so likewise every moral and legal right was violated in compelling them to enter into their service.

We had obtained some information in relation to an expected draught that would soon be made upon the prisoners to fill up a complement of men that were wanted for the service of his majesty's fleet.

One day in the latter part of August, our fears of the dreaded event were realized. A British officer with a number of soldiers came on board. The prisoners were all ordered on deck, placed on the larboard gangway, and marched in single file round to the quarter-deck, where the officers stood

to inspect them and select such ones as suited their fancies, without any reference to the rights of the prisoners, or considering at all the duties they owed to the land of their nativity, or the government for which they had fought and suffered.

The argument was, "Men we want, and men we will have." We continued to march round, in solemn and melancholy procession, till they had selected from among our number about three hundred of the ablest, nearly all of whom were Americans; and they were directed to go below under a guard, to collect together whatever things they wished to take belonging to them. They were then driven into the boats, waiting alongside, and left the prison-ship, not to enjoy their freedom, but to be subjected to the iron despotism, and galling slavery of a British man-of-war; to waste their lives in a foreign service; and toil for masters whom they hated. Such, however, were the horrors of our situation as prisoners, and so small was the prospect of relief, that we almost envied the lot of those who left the ship to go into the service even of our enemy.

That the reader may not think I have

given an exaggerated account of our sufferings on board of the Jersey, I will here introduce some facts related in the *histories of the Revolutionary War. I introduce them as an apology for the course that I and many of my fellow-citizens adopted to obtain a temporary relief from our sufferings.

The prisoners, captured by Sir William Howe in 1776, amounted to several hundreds.

The officers only were admitted to parole, and had miserable quarters assigned them, but the privates were confined in prisons, deserted churches, and other large open buildings; entirely unfit for the habitations of human beings, in severe winter weather, without any of the most ordinary comforts of life.

To the everlasting and indelible disgrace of the British name, these unfortunate victims of a barbarity more befitting savages, than gentlemen belonging to a nation boasting itself to be the most enlightened and civilized in the world, perished many hun-

* See Gordon's, Ramsay's, and Botta's Histories of the American Revolution.

dreds of them, from want of proper food and attention.

The cruelty of their inhuman jailers was not terminated by the death of these wretched men, as so little care was taken to remove their bodies, that SEVEN CORPSES have been seen at one time lying in one of these buildings in the midst of their living fellow-prisoners, who were, perhaps, envying them their release from misery.

The food, given the imprisoned "rebels," as the British called them, was not only deficient in quantity; but even the scanty portion dealt them was such, as would scarcely be tolerated by the meanest beggar, being generally that which had been rejected by the British ships as unfit to be eaten by the sailors, and unwholesome in the highest degree, as well as disgusting in taste and appearance.

In December, 1776, the American board of war after procuring such evidence as convinced them of the truth of their statement, reported: "That there were nine hundred privates, and three hundred officers, of the American army, prisoners in the

city of New York, and five hundred privates and fifty officers, in Philadelphia. That, since the beginning of October, all these prisoners, both officers and privates, had been confined in prison-ships or the provost. That, from the best evidence the subject could admit of, the general allowance of the prisoners did not exceed four ounces of meat per day, and that often so damaged as not to be eatable. That it had been a common practice with the British to keep their prisoners four or five days without a morsel of meat, and then tempt them to enlist, to save their lives."

Many were *actually starved to death*, in hope of making them enrol themselves in the British army.

The American sailors, when captured, suffered even more than the soldiers; for they were confined on board prison-ships in great numbers, and in a manner which showed that the British officers were willing to treat fellow-beings, whose only crime was love of liberty, worse than the vilest animals; and indeed, in every respect, with as much cruelty as is endured by the mis-

erable inhabitants of the worst class of slave ships.

The prisoners were so crowded in these ships, and so brutally treated, that, in consequence of bad food and impure air, diseases broke out among them, which destroyed immense numbers. In the course of the war, it has been asserted on good evidence, that *eleven thousand persons* died on board the Jersey, one of the largest of the prison-ships, stationed in East-river, near New York.

These unfortunate beings died in agony in the midst of their fellow-sufferers, who were obliged to witness their tortures, without the power of relieving their dying countrymen, even by cooling their parched lips with a drop of cold water, or a breath of fresh air; and, when the last breath had left the emaciated body, they sometimes remained for hours in close contact with the corpse, without room to shrink from companions death had made so horrible. And when at last the dead were removed, they were sent in boats to the shore, and so imperfectly buried, that, long after the war was ended, their bones lay whitening in

the sun on the beach of Long Island, a lasting memorial of British cruelty, so entirely unwarranted by all the laws of war, or even common humanity.

They could not even pretend they were retaliating; for the Americans invariably treated their prisoners with kindness, and as though they were fellow-men. All the time that these cruelties were performed, those, who were deprived of every comfort and necessary, were constantly entreated to leave the American service, and induced to believe, while kept from all knowledge of public affairs, that the republican cause was hopeless; that all engaged in it would meet the punishment of traitors to their king; and that all their prospect of saving their lives, or escaping from an imprisonment worse than death to young and high-spirited men, as most of them were, would be in joining the British army, where they would be sure of good pay and quick promotion.

These were the means employed by our enemies to increase their own forces, and discourage the patriots, and it is not strange that they were successful in many instances.

High sentiments of honor could not well exist in the poor, half-famished prisoners, who were denied even water to quench their thirst, or the privilege of breathing fresh, pure air; and cramped, day after day, in a space too small to admit of exercising their weary limbs; with the fear of wasting their lives in a captivity, which could not serve their country, nor gain honor to themselves.

But worse than all was the mortifying consideration, that, after they had suffered for the love of their country, more than soldiers in active service, they might die in these horrible places, and be laid with their countrymen on the shores of Long Island, or some equally exposed spot, without the rites of burial, and their names never be heard of by those who, in future ages, would look back to the roll of patriots, who died in defence of liberty, with admiration and respect; while, on the contrary, by dissembling for a time, they might be enabled to regain a place in the service so dear to them, and in which they were ready to endure any hardship or encounter any danger.

Of all the prisons, on land or water, for

the confinement of the Americans during the Revolutionary war, the "Old Jersey" was acknowledged to be the worst; such an accumulation of horrors was not to be found in any other one, or perhaps in all collectively.

The very name of it struck terror into the sailor's heart, and caused him to fight more desperately, to avoid being made a captive. Suffering as we did, day after day, with no prospect of relief; our number continually augmenting, and all hope of escape destroyed by the increased vigilance of our guards, since they ascertained how many had escaped; can it be thought strange that the younger part of the prisoners, to whom confinement seemed worse than death, should be tempted to enlist into the British service? especially when, by so doing, it was probable that some opportunity would be offered to desert? a course which many had adopted with success. We were satisfied that death would soon put an end to our sufferings, if we remained prisoners much longer; yet, when we discussed the expediency of seeking a change in our condition, which we were satisfied could not be

worse under any circumstances, and it was proposed that we should enter the service of "King George," our minds revolted at the idea, and we abandoned the intention.

In the midst of our distress, perplexities, and troubles at this period, we were not a little puzzled to know how to dispose of the vermin that would accumulate upon our persons, notwithstanding all our attempts at cleanliness. To catch them was a very easy task, but to undertake to deprive each individual captive of life, as rapidly as they could have been taken, would have been a more herculean task for each individual daily, than the destruction of the three thousand Philistines by Samson of old. To throw them overboard would have been but a small relief; as they would probably add to the impurities of the boiler, by being deposited in it the first time it was filled up for cooking our unsavory mess. What then was to be done with them? A general consultation was held, and it was determined to deprive them of their liberty. This being agreed upon, the prisoners immediately went to work, for their comfort and amusement, to make a liberal contribution of those mi-

gratory creatures, who were compelled to colonize for a time within the boundaries of a large snuff-box appropriated for the purpose. There they lay, snugly ensconced, of all colors, ages, and sizes, to the amount of some thousands, waiting for orders.

British recruiting officers frequently came on board, and held out to the prisoners tempting offers to enlist in his Majesty's service; not to fight against their own country, but to perform garrison duty in the island of Jamaica.

One day an Irish officer came on board for this purpose, and, not meeting with much success among the prisoners who happened to be upon deck, he descended below to repeat his offers. He was a remarkably tall man, and was obliged to stoop as he passed along between the decks. The prisoners were disposed for a frolic, and kept the officer in their company for some time, flattering him with expectations, till he discovered their insincerity, and left them in no very pleasant humor. As he passed along, bending his body, and bringing his broad shoulders to nearly a horizontal posi-


tion, the idea occurred to our minds to furnish him with some recruits from the colony in the snuff-box. A favorable opportunity presented, the cover of the box was removed, and the whole contents discharged upon the red-coated back of the officer. Three cheers from the prisoners followed the migration, and the officer ascended to the deck, unconscious of the number and variety of recruits he had obtained without the formality of an enlistment. The captain of the ship, suspicious that some joke had been practised, or some mischief perpetrated, from the noise below, met the officer at the head of the gangway, and, seeing the vermin crawling up his shoulders and aiming at his head with the instinct peculiar to them, exclaimed, "Hoot, mon, wha' is the matter with yer bock?" The captain was a Scotchman. By this time many of them, in their wanderings, had travelled round from the rear to the front, and showed themselves, to the astonishment of the officer. He flung off his coat in a paroxysm of rage, which was not allayed by three cheers from the prisoners on the deck. Confinement below, with

a short allowance, was our punishment for this gratification.

From some information we had obtained, we were in daily expectation of a visit from the British recruiting officers; and, from the summary method of their former procedure, no one felt safe from the danger of being forced into their service. Many of the prisoners thought it would be better to enlist voluntarily, as it was probable that afterwards they would be permitted to remain on Long Island, preparatory to their departure for the West Indies, and during that time some opportunity would be offered for their escape to the Jersey shore.

To remain an indefinite time as prisoners, enduring sufferings and privations beyond what human nature could sustain, or to make a virtue of necessity, and with apparent willingness to enlist into a service, into which we were satisfied that we should soon be impressed, seemed to be the only alternatives.

There was a hope, too, that, by voluntarily enlisting, we should obtain a degree of confidence, which would result in affording us



an opportunity of deserting, and thereby regaining our liberty.

While prisoners on board of the Jersey, we could obtain no accurate knowledge of the success of the American cause. The information we had, came from our enemies, whose interest it was to deceive us. They magnified our disasters, and kept us in ignorance of our success, and constantly represented the cause as hopeless. Cold weather was approaching, and we had no comfortable clothing to protect us from the rigors of an inclement season.

Situated as we were, there appeared to us to be no moral turpitude in enlisting in the British service, especially when we considered that it was almost certain we should soon be impressed into the same. Our moral discernment was not clear enough to perceive, that it was not safe "to do evil that good may come." We thought the end justified the means, and, in despair of any improvement being in prospect for our liberation, we concluded that we would enlist for soldiers, for the West India service, and trust to Providence for finding an

opportunity to leave the British for the American service.

Soon after we had formed this desperate resolution, a recruiting officer came on board to enlist men for the eighty-eighth regiment, to be stationed at Kingston, in the island of Jamaica. We had just been trying to satisfy our hunger upon a piece of beef, which was so tough that no teeth could make an impression on it, when the officer descended between decks, and represented to us the immense improvement that we should experience in our condition, if we were in his Majesty's service; an abundance of good food, comfortable clothing, service easy, and in the finest climate in the world, were temptations too great to be resisted by a set of miserable, half-starved, and almost naked wretches, as we were, and who had already concluded to accept of the proposition even had it been made under circumstances less enticing.

The recruiting officer presented his papers for our signature. We hesitated, we stared at each other, and felt that we were about to do a deed of which we were ashamed, and which we might regret. Again we

heard the tempting offers, and again the assurance that we should not be called upon to fight against our government or country; and, with the hope that we should find an opportunity to desert, of which it was our firm intention to avail ourselves when offered—with such hopes, expectations, and motives, we signed the papers, and became soldiers in his Majesty's service.

How often did we afterwards lament that we had ever lived to see this hour! how often did we regret that we were not in our wretched prison-ship again or buried in the sand at the Wallabout!

CHAPTER X.

WE shortly after, twelve in number, left the Jersey, and were landed upon Long Island and marched under a guard about a mile to an old barn, where we were quartered. We had formed our plan to desert that night; but great was our disappointment and surprise to find, that the barn was surrounded by a strong guard, as though our design was suspected and means were taken to prevent it. Though our lodgings seemed a palace compared with our prison-ship, yet sleep was a stranger to us during that night. Under various pretexts, we frequently went out to reconnoitre; but were satisfied that there was no chance for escape then, and must trust to Providence for some more favorable opportunity. The next morning, after we had partaken of, what appeared to us, a luxurious repast, we were paraded for drill, and then marched down to the shore under a guard of twenty soldiers, whom the officers called, in compliment to us, an

escort; an honor with which we could very well have dispensed. In our march, we passed the Jersey; and this gloomy hulk, with all the horrible associations connected with it, seemed a desirable resting place, compared with the melancholy prospect before us.*

Disappointed in all our hopes and expectations of escape, we were hurried on board of a vessel ready to sail for Jamaica, only waiting for a favorable wind. We entertained a faint hope, that, during our voyage, we might be taken by some American privateer, and consequently obtain our freedom.

In the course of six or eight days, we

*The reader may have some curiosity to know what became of the "Old Jersey." The prisoners, who were on board of her at the conclusion of the war in 1783, were liberated. The prison-ship was then abandoned, and the dread of contagion prevented any one visiting her. Worms soon destroyed her bottom, and she afterwards sunk. It is said that her planks were covered with the names of the captives, who had been immured there; a long and melancholy catalogue, as it is supposed that a greater number of men perished on board of her, than history informs us of in any other place of confinement in the same period of time.

In the year 1803, the bank at the Wallabout was removed, as preparatory to building a Navy Yard. A vast quantity of bones were found, which were carefully collected and buried under the direction of the Tammany Society of New York.

weighed anchor, and hoisted our sail for Jamaica. I placed myself upon the quarter deck, to prolong my view of my beloved native land, which I was leaving, I feared, forever. The winds were propitious, and our progress was rapid.

We had in company a small schooner, a Virginia built vessel, and a rapid sailer. Our captain occasionally put on board of her twelve or fifteen men, whom he generally selected from among those who had enlisted as soldiers, as they had for the most part experienced a sea service. We captured a small French vessel during the voyage, after we had come in sight of land and were running down to leeward of it under French colors.

We suddenly formed a plan to take possession of the schooner, of which we composed the greater part of the crew, and run into some Spanish or Portuguese island. Our ship was a good way ahead of us; and as she was a very dull sailer, we thought there would be no difficulty in escaping from her. It was necessary for us to be prompt and decided in our operations. The

crew was composed of various nations, and great caution must be used in our consultations. We finally agreed upon our plan, and were about putting it in execution, when the courage of one of our party failed. He was a Scotchman ; and, from the manner in which he expressed his fears and doubts, we had great reason to apprehend that he had or would betray us. During this time, we were running to the leeward, and, in case we succeeded, we should be obliged to beat up to the windward again, to recover the distance we had lost, and be exposed to the danger of meeting with English cruisers under the land. The attempt seemed too desperate to risk, and we reluctantly abandoned it, although it was our last and forlorn hope.

The next day we anchored in the harbor of Port Royal, where we lay one day, and sailed for Kingston. "Kingston is on the south coast of the island of Jamaica, and on the north side of a beautiful harbor, in which vessels of the largest burden may anchor in safety. It is built on a plain which commences on the shore, and rises with a gradual

ascent to the foot of the Liguanea mountains, a distance of about six miles. Port Royal stands at the extremity of the long and narrow peninsula which bounds Kingston harbor on the south, about ten miles south-west of Kingston. It has an excellent harbor, in which a thousand ships could anchor with convenience. It contains the royal navy-yard, the navy hospital, and barracks for a regiment of soldiers. The fortifications are remarkably strong, and are kept in excellent order." Our vessel was hauled up to a wharf; we remained on board till a British sergeant came and took our names.

The captain of our ship then informed us, that he was not ignorant of the design we had formed of taking possession of the ship during the voyage; and although it was in his power to have us tried for our lives by a court-martial for an intended mutiny, yet he was actuated by feelings of compassion, and was more desirous of doing us good than evil, and was willing to forgive us. He then gave us some salutary advice respecting our future conduct, and bid us farewell. This magnanimous conduct on

his part produced in us a heart-felt expression of gratitude.

We then landed, and with the sergeant at the head marched in single file through Kingston to a place called "Harmony-hall," where the regiment was quartered, and were placed under the care of a drill sergeant. The next morning we were ordered out for drill, and received our uniform and arms, which we were ordered to keep bright and in good order for service. We had but little employment, excepting being drilled to our hearts' content by the sergeant, to make good soldiers of us for the service of his majesty, king George the Third. The life of a soldier in a garrison is an idle one at the best; and, though the duties are not laborious, there is a monotony in them which is extremely irksome to the active mind of youth. But we could not reasonably expect to spend our lives in a garrison, if such a thing were desirable: after having had our share of it, we were aware that we should be called upon to perform some foreign service, we knew not where, perhaps to bear arms against our beloved country. With the fear

of this in view, and the reluctance we experienced in serving what we still considered the cause of our enemy, our minds were constantly employed in devising ways and means to effect our escape.

It appeared to be the object of our officers to reconcile us to the service, by making our duties easy and agreeable. We were often indulged with the privilege of leaving our quarters to visit the town or wander about the country adjacent. Harmony Hall, our quarters, was enclosed by a high fence, having two gates in front and one in the rear, at each of which a sentry was stationed. When a soldier wished to leave the Hall, it was necessary for him to obtain a written order called a "pass," to show to the sentry when he went out, and to give up when he returned. Several of us thought it a practicable thing to get on board some of the British merchant vessels in the harbor, which were in need of men, and whose captains would not hesitate to receive and secrete us, as they were frequently deprived of their hands by impressment on board of the ships of war. We availed ourselves of

every opportunity we could obtain to get information respecting English vessels, their time of sailing, their destined ports, &c.; thinking that if we could once get to England, we should find some means to get thence to France, whence we could return to our own country.

In our rambles about the town and country, we visited the grog-shops and taverns, places where sailors generally resort, and had got considerably acquainted with the keepers of these establishments. Our "passes" were signed by a commissioned officer, and they gave us permission to carry our side-arms, that is, a bayonet, and to be absent two hours at a time.

While I and one of my comrades were wandering about the town one day, we stepped into a house, where liquors and refreshments were to be obtained. We found one of the seats occupied by an English sailor, to whom we, rather too frankly for prudence, communicated our intentions; or, more correctly speaking, gave him some cause for suspecting our designs from the questions we asked him respecting

the probability of obtaining employment on board of some merchant vessel, in case we could get released from our present engagements. The sailor was inclined to be very sociable, and discovered no objections to drinking freely at our expense; telling us that he belonged to an English ship that would sail in a few days; that his captain was in want of hands; and that, at his intercession, he would undoubtedly take us on board.

He appeared so friendly, and his manners were so insinuating, that he completely won our confidence. He asked us how we could obtain liberty to leave the garrison, and to pass in and out when we pleased? Taking my "pass" out of my pocket, I showed it to him, and told him that was our authority. He took it into his hand, apparently with an intention of reading it; and, after looking at it for some time, in a sort of careless manner, he put it into his pocket. I felt a little surprised when I saw him do it, and my companion expressed his fears by whispering into my ear, "Blast his eyes, he means to keep the pass."



“The noise of this conflict brought the landlord into the room followed by his wife.”
P. 159.


Having allowed the fellow to get possession of the paper, I felt myself responsible for it, and that it was necessary for me to recover it, even if I were obliged to resort to violent measures. I therefore said to him, "My friend, I must have that paper, as we cannot return to our quarters without it." He replied, "You had better be peaceable about it, for I mean to see your commanding officer."

Matters had now come to a crisis. I saw that it was the sailor's object to inform against us, and to carry the "pass" as an evidence of our conference with him. I immediately drew my bayonet from its scabbard, and thrusting it against his side with force sufficient to inflict a slight wound, put my hand into his pocket and took out the "pass;" and then, giving him a blow upon the head with the butt end of my bayonet, dropped him senseless on the floor. The noise of this conflict brought the landlord into the room, followed by his wife, with whom a previous acquaintance had made me somewhat of a favorite. The rascal had by this time recovered his senses and had got upon his legs, and began to

represent the matter in a light the most favorable to himself.

We vehemently contradicted his assertions, and were stoutly backed up by the landlady, who was a considerable of a termagant, and declared that "the sailor was a quarrelsome fellow; that he had made a difficulty once before in the house; and that her husband would be a fool if he did not kick him out of doors."

The landlord, to prove that he was "compos mentis," and to appease the wrath of his wife, which waxed warm, complied with her kind wishes, and the sailor was, without much ceremony, hurried through the door, his progress not a little accelerated by a brisk application of the landlord's foot, which sent him spinning into the street in the manner prescribed by the good woman. We were then advised by our friends to return to our quarters as quick as possible, lest the fellow might make some trouble for us. We paid our bill, and gave the landlord many thanks, not forgetting the landlady, to whose kind interference we owed our fortunate escape. This circumstance made me more cautious in future of communicating



my designs to strangers, how friendly soever they might appear.

About this time I was unexpectedly released from the duties of a soldier. One day I attracted the attention of an officer, by the exercise of my skill as a barber, in the act of shaving a comrade; and was forthwith promoted to the high station of hairdresser and shaver for the officers. This was very agreeable to me, as it gave me an opportunity of obtaining much information respecting the town and country around, and likewise much leisure time, and many indulgences not granted to the soldiers.


I was assiduous in my attentions to my superiors, and thereby gained their confidence, and could, almost whenever I wished, procure a pass to go out when I desired.

But, although my duties were light and I experienced much kind treatment, I still felt myself in a state of servitude,—a prisoner, as it were, among the enemies of my country,—in a thralldom, from which I was desirous of being released. I was willing to incur any hazard to obtain my liberty, and to breathe once more the air of freedom.

To visit my dear native land, my friends, and the scenes of my childhood, was the prevailing wish of my mind; to accomplish this desire I was willing to hazard my life.

Many difficulties were to be surmounted before this could be effected. Friends were to be found, in whom confidence could be placed.

It was difficult to tell whom to trust. To impart my views to others might expose me to treachery; and, if betrayed, the consequences would be fatal. It was necessary to proceed with great caution in obtaining the opinions of those who were likely to embark in the undertaking I had in contemplation. Several must be found, possessing similar views and intentions, alike in courage and determination to carry through whatever plan might be formed. To desert from a military force, in an enemy's country, and that an island, seemed to be a desperate undertaking, with little prospect of success. But I was resolved upon the attempt, and my thoughts were continually employed in devising ways and means to effect it. I gained upon the confidence of the officers daily, and was indulged with



opportunities of leaving the garrison whenever I chose.


Availing myself of this privilege, I became acquainted with all the avenues from the town as far as Rock-fort, which was situated at the distance of two miles from Kingston, on the right-hand side of the road. I ascertained that it was a custom to place a number of sentries on the left-hand side of the road, about the eighth of a mile from the fort, in the road to Rock-fort, at a place called the "Plum-tree."

Deserters who were ignorant of this circumstance, were often taken up by the sentries, and brought back to the garrison. The night before we escaped, five soldiers were caught in the act of deserting, and brought back in the morning while the regiment were on parade. The poor fellows looked the very objects of despair when they were delivered up, and put under guard to await their trial by a court-martial.

I had become acquainted with five soldiers, who had been released from military duty, because they were mechanics, and could make themselves useful in the performance of various mechanical services.

They enjoyed considerable liberty, but did not possess the confidence of the officers in so great a degree as I did, having made myself useful and agreeable to them by personal attention in contributing to their comfort and convenience. My knowledge of the town and its environs rendered me a valuable coadjutor, and gave me more consequence in the estimation of my comrades, than I should otherwise have had, and made me a sort of leader in the enterprise, though I was then but about nineteen years of age.

We had frequent opportunities of being together to digest our plan, and to make arrangements for putting it into execution. About this time I had the good fortune to obtain a high degree of confidence, and to find great favor in the sight of the commanding officer, by the exercise of my professional skill in making him wonderfully satisfied with himself upon the occasion of a military ball. He was so much pleased with the improvement I made in his personal appearance, that in the fulness of his heart he gave me a "pass to go out whenever I chose till further orders."



This was a great privilege, and I derived great advantages from the use of it.

The five comrades,* with whom I had associated, as I have observed, were mechanics, two of whom were armorers; and they had obtained from the arsenal two pistols and three swords, which were all the weapons we had: these, together with some articles of clothing, we had deposited in the hut of an old negro, whom we had bribed to secrecy. The regiment, stationed at Rock-fort, was designated as "Lord Montague's men," or the American Rangers, and had been recruited in North and South Carolina. Their uniform was a short blue jacket with white facings. Having made all the preparations in our power, we appointed the time to commence the attempt.


Our plan was, to travel across the island, and trust to circumstances, which might providentially be thrown in our way, to escape to the island of Cuba. Our fears were not a little excited, when we saw the

* Their names were as follows: John Jones, Abraham Bassett, James Daly, Joseph Haynes. The name of the man whom we lost the first night of our escape, I have forgotten.

poor fellows brought back on the morning preceding the night we had fixed for our undertaking ; especially when we heard the commanding officer declare, "that, whatever might be their fate, the next, who should undertake to desert, should be hung."

I had a general pass, as I have before observed, for myself to go out at pleasure ; but it was necessary to obtain a special one for my companions, and this duty devolved on me.

In the afternoon, soon after dinner, I asked the commanding officer to grant me the favor of a pass for five of my acquaintance to go out to spend the evening, upon condition of returning before nine o'clock. The officer hesitated for a moment ; and then, as he signed the pass, said, "I believe I can trust you ; but remember that you must not come back without them." This I readily promised, and I faithfully fulfilled the obligation.



CHAPTER XI.

ABOUT the middle of the week, in the month of July, 1782, our little party of six, —five Americans, and one Irishman, an active, courageous fellow, —left the town, and proceeded to the negro's hut. where we received our weapons and clothing, and some little store of provisions which we had deposited. That afternoon a soldier had been buried at Rock-fort. and part of the regiment had been out to attend the funeral. Seeing these soldiers upon their return. at a distance, and fearing that our bundles might excite their suspicion, we concluded to separate and meet again as soon as the soldiers had passed. We escaped their notice, and fortunately met together a little time after, —all but one, who was missing. We waited some time, and looked in various directions for him, without success. We were afraid to remain where we were any longer, as it was now past eight o'clock; and we knew,

if we did not return by nine, a party would be sent in search of us.

The man whom we missed was somewhat intoxicated, and the probability was that he had lain down and fallen asleep; or perhaps his courage had failed, and he had given up the undertaking, and might have gone back and given information against us. We were satisfied that we could wait no longer for him without exposing ourselves to great danger, and therefore concluded to proceed without him. What was his fate I have never been able to ascertain.

We pushed rapidly forward till we had got about a mile from Kingston, when we entered a small piece of woodland, and divested ourselves of our uniform, which we had worn with much reluctance, and had never ceased to regret having exposed ourselves to the necessity of putting on; clothed ourselves in the sailor garments, which we had taken care to provide; cut the white binding from our hats; and were soon metamorphosed into much better sailors, than we had ever been soldiers.

Having loaded our pistols, we again pro-



ceeded. We had advanced but a few rods, when we met a sergeant, belonging to a regiment called the Liverpool Blues, who had been to Rock-fort to see some of his acquaintance, and was then upon his return. It was near the time for stationing the guard, as usual, at the place called the "Plum-tree." The sergeant hailed us with, "Where are you bound, my lads?" We answered, "To Rock-fort."

He replied, "I have just come from there and found all well: how goes on the recruiting at New York? and what is the news?"

A ship had arrived the day previous, from New York, and he supposed that we were some of the recruits that she had brought over.

We perceived his mistake, and adapted our answers to his questions, so as to encourage his delusion. We told him that the recruiting went on bravely, and we were going to join our regiment at Rock-fort.

The fellow seemed to be in a very happy mood, and immediately declared his inten-

tion of turning back to show us the way to the fort.

Our situation was rendered very embarrassing by this kind offer; and to refuse it, we feared, would excite suspicion. Our generous guide thought he was doing us service, when he was leading us directly to destruction; and the idea of killing him, while he imagined that he was performing a good service for us, was very unpleasant; but it was our only alternative. In a few moments the deed would have been done; self-preservation made it necessary; but, fortunately for the poor fellow, and much to our satisfaction, he suddenly recollected that his pass required him to be back to Kingston by nine o'clock, and, bidding us good-night, and telling us that we could not miss the way, he left us, and pursued his route to Kingston at a rapid pace.

We thought it important that we should get as far from Kingston that night as possible, as we should undoubtedly be pursued in the morning; and the sergeant, from whom we had just parted, would give information of us, as soon as he arrived and ascertained that we were deserters. The danger, to

which we had been exposed by our recent interview, cast a gloom over our spirits, and gave us a realizing sense of the difficulties and hazards with which we must contend. But go forward we must, for to go back would be death.

We proceeded at a rapid pace for about half of a mile farther, when we met with an old negro, who hailed us, saying, "Where be you going, massa buckra men?*" there be a plenty of soldiers a little way a-head; they will take you up, and put you on board of man-of-war." We told him that we had got a pass. The negro replied, "Dey no care for dat, dey put you on board a man-of-war." He mistook us for sailors who were deserting from some ship.

I had become acquainted with several negroes in Kingston, and always found them kind and willing to give any information that was in their power to furnish. They appeared to feel a sort of sympathy for the soldiers and sailors; seeing some resemblance between their own degraded condition and that of the miserable military

* "Buckra man" was the common name among the Negroes for a white man.

and naval slaves of British despotism. Whatever might be the cause, I always found the negroes in and about Kingston ready to give every facility to a soldier or sailor who wished to desert. We soon agreed with the old fellow for a dollar to guide us into a path through the woods, by following which we should avoid the guard at the "Plum-tree," in whose vicinity we then were. I had reconnoitred the ground sufficiently, previous to this, to be aware of the necessity of taking this path, and knew about where it was; but we were sensible that a faithful guide, who had a perfect knowledge of the ground, would be of great service to us, especially in the night.

After we had entered the woods, we had no fear of treachery on the part of our guide, as his life was in our hands. The fate that awaited him, should he attempt to jeopardize our safety, was clearly understood by him; but, the earnest and simple manner in which he declared the sincerity of his intentions in serving us, put at rest in our minds all doubts of his fidelity. We followed our guide about a mile, when he told us that we had got past the guard,

and, giving us directions as to our future course, he left us, after having called God to witness that he never would inform against us. We had no reason to doubt that he faithfully kept his promise.

Our anxiety to escape pursuit determined us to use all the expedition we could through the night. About midnight, we came to one of the many rivulets with which Jamaica abounds. As we were unable to determine what its width or depth was in the darkness, it was necessary to proceed with caution. The tallest of our party was sent forward to try to wade across. The rest followed in single file, according to our respective heights; I, being the shortest, brought up the rear. Holding our arms and provisions and part of our clothing above our heads, we soon arrived on the opposite shore. When I was in the middle of the river, I found the water up to my chin, and was fearful at one time that I should be obliged to abandon my bundle, and resort to swimming. We travelled in our wet clothes the remainder of the night, and, towards daylight, we looked round for

some retired spot, where we could secrete ourselves during the day, as we considered that it would expose us to great hazard, if not to certain detection, to travel by daylight at so little distance from Kingston as we then were. We soon found a secluded spot on the side of a hill thickly set with brushwood, well calculated for concealing us from the view of any who might pass that way.

In the course of the forenoon, we saw from our place of concealment a number of negroes pass by, carrying to the market at Kingston various articles of country produce upon their heads in baskets. We had provided for our sustenance a small quantity of bread and dried herring, sufficient to last three days, the time we thought requisite to travel across the island; of this provision we eat sparingly, but suffered much for want of water, as we were afraid of being seen if we ventured from our hiding-place till night, when we cautiously, one at a time, crept down to the foot of the hill, and quenched our thirst from a small rivulet.

As soon as it was dark enough to prevent

discovery, we left our place of concealment, and proceeded on our second night's journey.

We had been exposed to considerable danger the preceding night and day, and had suffered much from hunger, and more from thirst; our spirits were depressed, and we experienced the wearisomeness that arises from a want of sleep. Gloomy forebodings assailed us; and we moved on in melancholy silence. After having travelled three or four hours, we unexpectedly found ourselves near a hut, and were alarmed at hearing a negro female voice exclaim, "Here come a whole parcel of Buckra man." We immediately started from the spot, and proceeded with all practicable speed till we had travelled three or four miles, when we sat down to rest, and to refresh ourselves with some of our bread and dried herring.

After we had rested about half an hour, we renewed our journey with all the speed we could exercise; and proceeded without interruption till day-light approached, when we thought it necessary to find a place for concealment during the day. We entered the woods at a short distance from the road,

where we spent the day, partially satisfying our hunger with a scanty portion of bread and herring, and some berries, which we found, of various kinds; and amusing ourselves with the relation of the dangers we had passed through, and speculations upon the nature of those which we might be called upon to encounter. The day passed without any alarm, and as night approached we prepared to re-commence our journey. Soon after dark, we issued from the woods, entered upon the road, and proceeded for several hours without meeting with anything to molest or make us afraid. We occasionally rested, eat sparingly of our nearly exhausted stores, and drank water when we could find it, and travelled without interruption till morning. A place for concealment during the day was again selected; and, as we had slept but little since we left Kingston, we concluded to get all the rest we could, and spent the greater part of the day in sleep, each one of us in succession keeping watch while the others slept. After several hours' rest, we found ourselves considerably refreshed; and as our small stock of provisions was nearly exhausted, and we

had consumed nearly the time we had anticipated would be required to arrive on the opposite side of the island, we concluded that we would venture to travel by daylight.

We took the precaution to divide our party, three taking one side of the road, a little in advance, and two on the other side; keeping a vigilant look-out, in every direction. One of our men in advance gave notice, some time in the forenoon, that he discovered an object at a distance apparently approaching. We thought it prudent to retire from the road to a neighboring thicket, till we could ascertain what the object was. It proved to be a gentleman on horseback, who, by his dress, appeared to be an officer of high rank, followed by a servant.

The officer wore a large, gold-laced, three-cornered hat, and was richly dressed: both he and his servant were well armed. As soon as they had passed and were out of sight, we left our retreat with the intention of proceeding; but, finding ourselves in need of more rest, we penetrated farther into the woods to find a place of repose.

Our strength began to fail for want of food, and we found it necessary to take more frequent opportunities for rest and sleep. We gathered a few berries, and, having enjoyed a few hours of uninterrupted sleep, we felt refreshed, and returned to the road to pursue our journey. We travelled without interruption till about three o'clock in the afternoon, and, while ascending a hill, we were alarmed by hearing the sound of voices. We stopped, and collected together to consult upon what course to adopt. In a few moments, we saw coming over the hill three stout negroes, armed with muskets, which they immediately presented to us, and ordered us to stop.

Our arms, as I have formerly observed, consisted of two pistols and three swords; upon the pistols we could place but little dependence, as they were not in good order; and the swords were concealed under our clothes; to attempt to draw them out would have caused the negroes instantly to fire upon us.

They were about ten rods before us, and stood in the attitude of taking a deliberate aim at us. To run would be certain death

to some of us ; we therefore saw no alternative but to advance. One of our number, a man named Jones, a tall, powerful fellow, took a paper from his pocket, and, holding it up before him, advanced, with great apparent confidence in his manner, and the rest of us imitated his example. As we approached, Jones held out the paper to one of them, telling him that it was our pass, giving us authority to travel across the island. The negroes, as we very well knew, were unable to read ; it was therefore immaterial what was written upon the paper,—I believe it was an old letter,—as manuscript or print was entirely beyond their comprehension. While we were advancing, we had time to confer with each other ; and the circumstances of the moment, the critical situation in which we were placed, naturally led our minds to one conclusion, to obtain the consent of the negroes that we might pursue our journey ; but if they opposed our progress, to resort to violence, if we perished in the attempt.

There was something very exciting to our feelings in marching up to the muzzles of these fellows' guns ; to have our progress

interrupted when we were, as we supposed, so near the end of our journey. Our sufferings had made us somewhat savage in our feelings; and we marched up to them with that determination of purpose which desperate men have resolved upon, when life, liberty, and everything they value is at stake; —all depended upon prompt and decisive action.

This was a fearful moment. The negroes stood in a row, their muskets still presented, but their attention was principally directed to the paper which Jones held before them; while our eyes were constantly fixed upon them, anxiously watching their motions, and designing to disarm them as soon as a favorable opportunity should be offered.

The negroes were large and powerful men, while we, though we outnumbered them, were worn down by our long march, and enfeebled by hunger. In physical power we were greatly their inferiors. But the desperate circumstances in which we were placed inspired us with uncommon courage, and gave us an unnatural degree of strength.



.. We made a sudden and desperate spring forward and seized their muskets." P. 181.

We advanced steadily forward, shoulder to shoulder, till the breasts of three of us were within a few inches of the muzzles of their guns. Jones reached forward and handed the paper to one of the negroes. He took it, and having turned it round several times, and examined both sides, and finding himself not much the wiser for it, shook his head and said, "We must stop you." The expression of his countenance, the doubts which were manifested in his manner of receiving the paper, convinced us, that all hope of deceiving or conciliating them was at an end.

Their muskets were still presented, their fingers upon the triggers. An awful pause of a moment ensued, when we made a sudden and desperate spring forward, and seized their muskets; our attack was so unexpected, that we wrenched them from their hands before they were aware of our intention. The negro, whom I attacked, fired just as I seized his gun, but I had fortunately turned the direction of it, and the ball inflicted a slight wound upon my side, the scar of which remains to this day.

This was the only gun that was discharged during this dreadful encounter.

As soon as it was in my possession, I exercised all my strength, more than I thought I possessed, and gave him a tremendous blow over the head with the breech, which brought him to the ground, from which he never rose.

I had no sooner accomplished my work, when I found my companions had been equally active, and had despatched the other two negroes in the same space of time. None of our party received any injury but myself, and my wound I considered as trifling.

The report of the gun we were fearful would alarm some of our enemies' comrades, who might be in the vicinity, and bring them to the spot. We accordingly dragged the bodies to a considerable distance into the woods, where we buried them under a quantity of leaves and brush. In their pockets we found a few biscuit, which were very acceptable to us in our famished condition.

The best gun was selected, as we did not think it necessary to burden ourselves with

the others, as they had been injured in the conflict. We took what ammunition we thought necessary, and then sought a place of rest for the remainder of the day.

The negroes whom we had encountered, belonged to a class called "Cudjoe men," who were free, in consequence of some services, which their ancestors, the Maroons, agreed to render to the government;* and were permitted to inhabit the mountains and the northern part of the island. They were encouraged to exercise their vigilance by the promise of receiving a certain sum of money for every fugitive slave they restored to his master, or soldier whom they should arrest as a deserter. We had been apprized of the existence of these beings before we left Kingston, and were in constant fear of meeting with some of them. Their huts were scattered along the three roads from Kingston, viz., Rock-fort road, the County road, and the Spanish-town road. We avoided as much as possible all of these roads, and travelled circuitous paths in the woods; and, having no guide

* See the Appendix at the end of the book, for an account of the "Cudjoe-men."

and an imperfect compass, we wandered a great deal out of the direct way; and much of the time travelled considerable distances without making any advancement.

The direct distance across the island is about forty or fifty miles, which we could have travelled with ease in two days;* but,

* "The island of Jamaica lies about thirty leagues south of Cuba. A range of lofty mountains, called the Blue Mountains, runs through the whole island from east to west, in some places seven thousand feet above the level of the sea. On the north side of the island the land rises from the shore in high swells, which are remarkable for their beauty, being all of gentle acclivity, and commonly separated from each other by spacious vales and romantic rivulets. Towards the interior, the land becomes more elevated, and is clothed with almost boundless forests; and, in the centre of the island, it rises into lofty mountains, whose heads are lost in the clouds. The southern front of the main ridge of the Blue Mountains is generally rough and craggy; but on the south side are several lower ridges, running parallel with the principal one, the summits of which are more round and smooth; and, at the foot of the lowest ridge lie vast plains or savannas, bounded only by the ocean, and displaying all the pride of the richest cultivation."

The heights, called the Liguanea mountains, are within six miles of Kingston, and I understand that the British regiments, at present or lately stationed on the island of Jamaica, have formed an encampment on them, where they are quartered when not on other duty. Favored with a salubrious atmosphere, these mountains are not only healthy, but capable no doubt of being strongly fortified; yet an intelligent captain of a vessel, who has recently been on the island, in-

from the cautious manner we proceeded and the irregular course we pursued, we were nearly five days in accomplishing our undertaking. Considering our ignorance of the interior parts of the island, it has ever since been a matter of surprise to me that we succeeded in getting across the island; and that we did not perish in the woods.

Had we travelled upon either of the before named roads, instead of threading our way through the woods, we should

forms me that great numbers of the soldiers are injudiciously granted leave daily of visiting the populous city of Kingston, on condition of returning before night. The sudden change of temperature, from the close and heated atmosphere and parching sunbeams on the plains, to the bracing and chilling evening air of the mountains, the one causing immoderate perspiration and a feverish state of the blood, and the other hastily and violently closing the pores of the bodies of the soldiery on their return to quarters, many of them half-intoxicated, lays the foundation or is the immediate cause of more sickness and death than all other causes put together.

He says the British officers have contemplated a partial prohibition of intercourse between the camp and city, but have met with discontent from the soldiers, who are unwilling to be deprived of the indulgence, however painful or fatal to them in its consequences.

The population of the island of Jamaica, in 1782, was about 30,000 whites, 10,000 freed negroes or mulattoes, 1,400 free maroons, and 200,000 negro slaves.

have been overtaken by the parties of soldiers, who were sent in pursuit of us. I received information, several years after our escape, of the exertions that were used to overtake us and carry us back to Kingston. A young man, by the name of Hunt, was carried into Kingston, as a prisoner, taken by a British vessel, the day after our escape. Previous to his sailing from Boston, he had heard that I was in Kingston; and when made a prisoner, he hoped to obtain some assistance from me in his captivity, as we had been formerly acquainted. He made inquiries of the sergeant of the guard, placed over him, respecting me. The sergeant replied, that "Fox was fool enough to run off last night, with five others; he had no military duty to perform; all he had to do was to shave and dress the officers, and he spent most of the time in walking about the streets. I suppose they think they will show us a Yankee trick; but they will find themselves mistaken, for there are three parties out after them, one on each road, and they had orders to bring them back before night, dead or alive." It seems by this account that we must have been taken,

had we not pursued our journey in the woods instead of the road.

To return to my narrative: We lay down in the woods, languid and exhausted, after the excitement and fatigue from our contest with the negroes, and slept soundly for some time, when I suddenly awoke, and saw at a little distance from me the head of a monstrous serpent, raised several feet from the ground, and gazing earnestly upon us, with his mouth frightfully distended. I was so much alarmed that, at first, I imagined it to be the "old serpent" himself, and immediately awakened my companions. But I believe the serpent was more alarmed than we were, for he darted off among the bushes with so much rapidity that I could not ascertain his length, but was satisfied that the circumference of his body was of the size of a man's.

As it was now nearly dark, we thought we would venture again upon our journey. Having loaded our musket, the spoils of our victory, we entered the road, and, having looked around with great caution, and finding no obstacles in the way to excite any apprehension, we started forward. We

knew not for a certainty where we were; but were satisfied, from the time we had consumed in our journey, that we could not be at a great distance from the northern side of the island.

CHAPTER XII.

WE travelled all night, occasionally stopping to rest, and refresh ourselves with some of the hard biscuit, which we had found in the pockets of the negroes, and a draught of water from the springs by the road-side.

As daylight approached, we found ourselves on the summit of a hill, and in sight of the ocean. I doubt whether Columbus and his crew experienced more heart-felt joy when they saw the new world, than our little party did when we discovered the sea. We could hardly refrain from uttering a loud exclamation of joy. Here was an end to our wanderings, our fatigue, and sufferings. We gazed upon the watery expanse with feelings of unutterable delight, upon whose surface we were to be wafted from the shores of captivity.

After we had remained as long as we thought prudent upon the eminence, we retired to the woods, for concealment during

the day. We needed rest, and slept the greater part of the day.

We ventured out several times in the course of the day to take a peep abroad, but with great care that we should not be seen. We saw a number of negroes moving about in various directions, but were not discovered by any of them.

Our plan of operations for the future was the subject of much discussion; but we arrived at no definite conclusion, excepting to avail ourselves of any opportunity that should be offered to leave the island.

We had supposed, although perhaps we had no good reason for it, that we might find some merchant vessel on the coast, in which we might be received as sailors; as it was difficult to obtain men, and their wages were high.

Before sunset, we left our hiding place, after eating the remainder of our bread, and proceeded cautiously towards the shore, keeping ourselves concealed as much as possible behind the bushes.

We saw a number of huts, scattered along the shore, mostly separate, some in small clusters. Part of the time during the day, a

fog had prevailed, which now cleared away, and our prospect was uninterrupted. The island of Cuba could just be seen in the horizon, at the distance of thirty leagues; between that and us lay the ocean, smooth and unruffled, and not a sail to whiten its surface.

Dejected and melancholy, we again sought our place of concealment, to reflect upon our situation, and form some determination respecting future operations. To remain where we were long, without starving or being detected, was impossible; but how to get away was the problem to be solved. Undetermined what to do, we left our retreat again, and the first object that met our view upon the water was a sail-boat directing her course to the shore near where we were.

Here was a means of escape that Providence had thrown in our way. Our previous despair was now changed into hope, and, with spirits suddenly elated, we retreated to the bushes to come to some immediate decision.

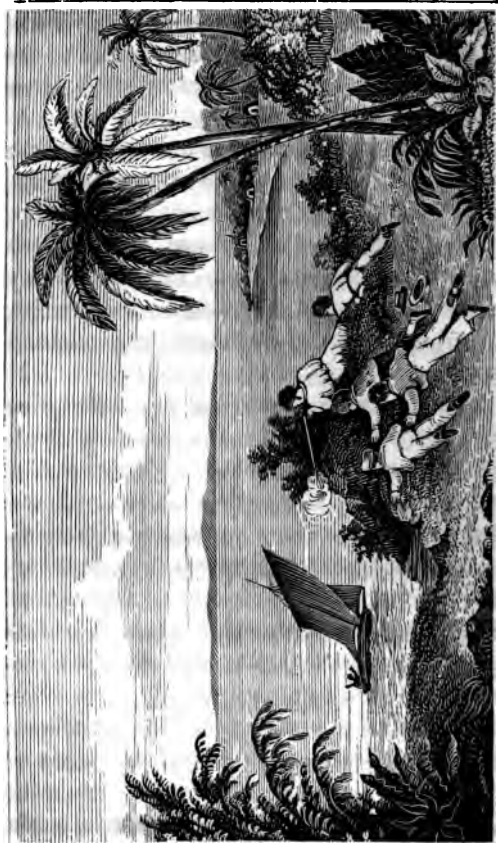
We resolved ourselves into a committee, appointed a moderator, and proceeded to

business. The question to be discussed was, whether we should attempt to make a prize of the boat, and escape to Cuba. Without spending much time, as we had none to spare, to discuss the question, or to hear speeches for, much less against it, we put it to vote, and carried it unanimously.

The wind was blowing from the shore, and the boat was consequently beating in against the wind. This was a favorable circumstance for us, if we could get possession of the boat. The undertaking was fraught with difficulty and danger, but it was our only chance for escape.

We left our council place, and crept cautiously down to the shore, keeping concealed as much as possible behind the bushes, till we arrived near to the point, at which we thought the boat was steering. As she was beating against the wind, we concluded, if the man at the helm could be brought down, the boat would luff, which would bring her near the shore, when we were immediately to spring on board. Jones, being the best marksman, took the musket, and seeing that it was well loaded and primed, crept as close to the edge of the shore as he could without





“ Bung went the gun, and down went the negro from the helm.” P. 193.

being discovered by the crew, and lay down, to wait for a good opportunity to fire at the man at the helm. The rest of us kept as near to him as possible.

Every circumstance seemed to favor our design. The negroes were all in their huts, and everything around was quiet and still.

The boat soon approached near enough for Jones to take a sure aim; and we scarcely breathed as we lay extended on the ground, waiting for him to perform the duty assigned him.

In a few moments, bang went the gun, and down went the negro from the helm into the bottom of the boat; and, as we had anticipated, the helm being abandoned, the boat luffed up in the wind and was brought close to the shore, which was bold, and the water deep enough to float her. The instant the gun was fired, we were upon our feet, and in the next moment up to our waists in the water alongside of the boat.

No time was lost in shoving her about, and getting her bows from the land. There was a fresh breeze from the shore; the sails filled; and the boat was soon under a brisk

headway. I remained in the water the last, and, as I attempted to get on board, my hands slipped from my hold on the gunwale, and I fell into the water. I heard an exclamation, "Good God! Fox is lost!" from one of our party; but as the boat swept by me, I caught with my middle finger in the noose of a rope that hung over the stern, and was seized by the cape of my jacket and drawn into the boat by the powerful arm of Jones, who was managing the helm. All that I have described was apparently the work of a moment. Never did men use greater exertions than we did at this time.

The report of Jones' gun alarmed the negroes, and brought them from their huts in all directions down to the shore, armed with muskets and clubs, and full of rage and fury. They waded out after us, up to their chins in the water; and fired volley after volley, as fast as they could load. The bullets fell thickly around us, but fortunately none of us were injured. Our progress was so rapid, that we were soon out of reach of their shot; but, as soon as

we could find time, we loaded our gun and gave one parting salute.

Our attention was next directed to the disposal of the crew of the boat we had captured, consisting of three men and a boy. As soon as we sprang into the boat, they fled with terror and amazement into a sort of cabin in the bow, where they still remained.

It was no wonder that they were frightened, attacked so suddenly by an enemy, who, as it seemed to them, had arisen all at once from the bowels of the earth or the depths of the ocean.

Whether the head of the negro at the helm was bullet-proof, or whether the ball approached so near to it as to frighten him into insensibility, we never knew; but we found him prostrate in the bottom of the boat, when we entered it, apparently dead; but, to our gratification, we soon found that he was alive, and not a curl of his wool decomposed.

He was soon upon his knees, supplicating mercy, in which attitude and tone he was followed by the rest of the crew as we called

them from their hiding place. Had we been disposed to do an unjust action, we had an opportunity of realizing a considerable sum of money, by carrying them to Cuba and selling them for slaves.

The temptation was great to men destitute of funds as we were; but our moral sense overcame the temptation, and we gave them their choice to proceed with us on our voyage, or expose themselves to the hazard of drowning by attempting to swim ashore. They accepted the latter proposition with much gratitude, and were soon swimming lustily for the shore, from which we were at the distance of more than a mile, where we saw them all safely arrive.

We felt some anxiety respecting the ability of the boy to swim so far; but, as he was desirous of going with them, two of our men took him by his arms and legs, and gave him a regular yo-hoi-ho heave; and we had the satisfaction of seeing the little fellow shaking the water from his curly pate upon the shore, before his companions had landed.

The negroes collected around them in

great numbers after they landed, probably to hear their account of the transaction; and to obtain information concerning our intentions and destination.

We felt animated by our success. We found the boat in good order; and, with a fresh breeze, we made rapid progress. We found a plenty of provisions in the boat, with which, for the first time for five days, we abundantly satisfied our hunger.

It was now nearly dark, and we had got a considerable distance from the shore; but we continued to watch the movements of the negroes with anxiety, lest they should pursue us. After the negroes had held a short consultation together, we saw them all start off with great rapidity towards a point of land, under which we thought we could see something lying, that had the appearance of a vessel. As the negroes ran in that direction, we had no doubt that they had some plan in contemplation in relation to our capture. Our fears and conjectures were soon reduced to a matter of fact; for we had proceeded but a little distance farther, when we came in plain sight of a

schooner at anchor. We could see the negroes rush on board of her, and could just discern, or our fears caused us to imagine it, the uplifted axe, which cut away the cable and liberated her from her moorings. The schooner was soon under weigh, and sailing in a direction to cut us off; but we trusted that the approaching darkness would in a short time conceal us from the sight of our pursuers. As the schooner was a large object, compared with our little boat, we could see her long after we were invisible to them. After being satisfied of the course the schooner was taking, we thought the best way to avoid her would be to put about directly for Jamaica.

We sailed in this direction till we supposed that our enemy had got considerably past the course for us to pursue, when we again put about, and steered as directly as we were able for Cuba. The sails of our boat consisted of a small jib, and a sort of a square sail; and, the breeze being quite fresh, they were well filled, and our progress was rapid.

In the morning, when from the hill we discovered what we supposed to be Cuba,

we ascertained its bearing from Jamaica, by our little compass; and now directed our course to the point, where we should find a place of safety.

Once, during the night, we were alarmed by a noise like the sound of voices, and thought that the schooner was near us. We saw her, or imagined so; but could not determine with certainty whether it was a reality or the result of our excited imaginations.

We sailed without interruption through the night, and, from the rapidity with which we had passed through the water, we concluded we could not be a great distance from the land. As soon as daylight approached we espied the shore, and lost no time in making for it. Shortly after, we saw, at a considerable distance, the schooner, apparently steering for Jamaica. They discovered us, and altered their course directly for us. Their approach, however, excited no alarm in our minds now, for we were sure that we could run our boat on shore before they could come up with us. Their kind intentions were manifested in the compliment of a few salutes from a swivel,

which proved as harmless as the courtesy we endeavored to show them by half a dozen salutes from the musket which had previously done us more faithful service. The schooner soon gave up the chase, "and left us alone in our glory."

As we approached the shore, we saw six or eight men running down towards us, and making signs for us to keep off, and to go round a point of land to the leeward. We were satisfied that their motive was friendly, as, at that part of the shore, a heavy surf was running, which would have made it very dangerous for us to have attempted to land.

After we had passed round the point, we lay to, till we were boarded by four or five Spaniards, who came off in a small boat. We knew as little of their language as they of ours; but, by a variety of gesticulations, and often repeating the words, America, Jamaica, Kingston, &c., we made them comprehend, in some degree, our circumstances.

They saw that we were in distress, and probably were not unwilling to appropriate our boat to their use.

It was easy for them to perceive by our

looks that we had suffered much from fatigue and hunger; the last two days we had endured as much as human nature was capable of sustaining, and the effects were visible in our appearance. They took us on shore, carried us to a hut, where they placed before us a plentiful supply of pork and pease, together with a large bowl of beans. This was the first comfortable meal we had enjoyed since we left Kingston, and we enjoyed it in peace without any fear of interruption.

We eat to our stomachs' content, and then were left alone to obtain some sleep, of which we were in great need, having been nearly as destitute of that, as we had been of food, for the last six days. We slept soundly till past noon.

I think I have never since enjoyed a more satisfactory meal or more refreshing sleep than I did that day. No care for the future crossed our minds. Our dangers were passed, our object was accomplished. We felt ourselves free men. When we reflected upon the events of the last six days; the hazard to which we had been exposed; the desperate encounters we had maintained;

our hair-breadth escapes; our hearts were filled with gratitude to Him, who overrules all things, and by whose goodness we had been preserved.

Enlisting in the British service I had never ceased to regret, from the moment I left the old Jersey prison-ship. There was something revolting to the mind of an American in the reflection of being subject to the authority of the oppressors of his country. It was a thralldom, from which I was determined to be liberated. My mind was occupied with this intention; danger and death were minor considerations, compared with the accomplishment of this object. It was accomplished; we awoke, and rejoiced that we were free. But much remained to be done; and although we were safe from pursuit, we were strangers in a strange land, far from our native soil, and ignorant of what means were in our power to return to our own country.

The people around appeared to be friendly, but still they looked upon us with suspicion; and, though they did not treat us like prisoners, they watched our motions with some

degree of vigilance. When we went out of the hut, where we had been so hospitably entertained, we found a large collection of Spaniards, who, by the language common to man, questioned us respecting whence we came, who we were, and whither we wished to go. To all of these questions we replied as well as we were able, by gestures and grimaces, making ourselves as intelligible to them as they did to us.

It was evident to us, that our friends were desirous of our departure, and were willing to offer us every facility to favor their wishes. We reciprocated their good feelings, and were as anxious to leave them as they were to bid us farewell.

Pork, pease, and beans, were again set before us, upon which we made a sumptuous repast, and felt ourselves surprisingly recruited. Our friends then directed our attention to a small vessel, lying up a creek, close under the land, which was ready to sail for St. Domingo, now called Hayti. They engaged a passage for us in this vessel, which was of about fifty tons' burden, and rigged like a lugger.

We weighed anchor about sunset, but, as it was foggy, our progress was at first rather slow. After a sail of three days, we approached the island of St. Domingo in the night, and lay off till the next day, when, the wind proving favorable, we run into port, and dropped anchor in the harbor of Cape François, now Cape Henri.

During this short voyage, we received much kind treatment from the captain and crew, being plentifully supplied with provisions, and permitted to enjoy as much rest as we desired.

With recovered strength and spirits, we prepared to leave the vessel; and, with gratitude to the captain for his kindness, and to God for his mercies, we went on board of the American frigate *Flora*, of thirty-two guns, commanded by Henry Johnson, Esq., of Boston.

CHAPTER XIII.

In the year 1778, Count d'Estaing, with his fleet, approached Newport, R. I., with the intention of attacking the British, who were in possession of that place. The British destroyed their frigates in the harbor, to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy. The Orpheus, Lark, Juno, and Cerberus frigates, they burned; the Flora and the Falcon they sunk. The Americans afterwards raised the Flora, and fitted her up for service against her former masters. This frigate I found anchored in the harbor of Cape Henri.

The sight of the thirteen stripes and stars, floating over an American frigate, gave animation to our thoughts and actions. We felt sure of safety and protection. With much exultation and satisfaction, we stepped upon the deck of the Flora. We could hardly realize that we were the same men, who, a few days before, were fleeing through

the woods of Jamaica, like beasts of night, avoiding the light of day, and afraid of the sight of a negro. When we compared our present condition with what it had been during the greater part of the past year; in confinement on board of that "floating hell," the "Old Jersey;" in garrison, serving the enemy of our country, with feelings of disgust and despondency; fugitives from that enemy, under circumstances that rendered our escape almost hopeless, with the certainty of death in case of detection; when we thought of all this, and found ourselves standing erect, among our own countrymen, upon the deck of an American frigate, we almost doubted our personal identity; our feelings may be more easily imagined than described.

Captain Johnson received us kindly, and was willing to employ us for the voyage at a compensation of ten dollars per month; but, when my comrades were informed that the vessel was not going directly to Boston; that she would visit France first, and might stay there some time, they declined engaging in her service. Two of them belonged to Connecticut, one to Rhode-Island, and

the other was an Irishman. They succeeded in finding a vessel that was bound to some port near home, and whose voyage would be less circuitous than that of the *Flora*. I was the only one of our little party, who had suffered so much together, who entered into the service of Captain Johnson. I was as anxious to get home as my companions; but there was a degree of safety on board of the *Flora*, which I could not expect on board of a merchant ship.

I likewise felt some desire of visiting France; and I entertained some hope that we might make some captures in the course of the voyage; for I had not yet rested long enough after my sufferings to cultivate the Christian spirit of "forgiveness to my enemies." I felt willing to encounter the hazard of an engagement, for an opportunity to pay off some old scores, which I fancied were then their due.

I received from our noble captain two months' wages in advance, and, being destitute of everything necessary for the voyage, excepting the miserable clothes which I wore, I was permitted to go on shore to make the purchases that I thought requisite.

As my companions had determined not to engage in the service of the *Flora*, but to seek for a berth on board of some other vessel, I knew that I must experience the painful task of separation from those who were endeared to me as fellow-sufferers in afflictions and dangers. The ties of friendship which united us, were too strong to be easily broken. The circumstances which had engaged us in one common cause, had created a fraternal feeling in our breasts too deep to be soon obliterated. We concluded to grace our parting with a farewell supper. We adjourned to a public house, and gave directions for a sumptuous repast; and, while it was preparing, we regaled ourselves upon a few bottles of claret, in order to elevate our spirits to a proper degree, that the gloomy thoughts of our separation might not allow our supper to be a melancholy one. By the time the feast was prepared, our spirits were raised to a proper state for enjoyment; and a happier or more jolly set of fellows never assembled around a table, than we were that night.

The sufferings we had endured, and the dangers we had passed, were fruitful sub-

jects for conversation. We eat and drank till a late hour, when we arose from the table, and, grasping each other by the hand, and with feelings that touched our hearts, we said to each other, "God bless you—farewell." To me this was a final farewell to my companions; from that time to the present I have never seen one of them, nor have I ever heard what became of them.

As they were all older than myself, it is not probable that any of them are now among the living. If they are, I repeat the farewell wish, which I gave fifty-six years ago—"God bless you!"

The next day, after I had purchased what articles of clothing I thought necessary for the voyage, I went on board of the *Flora*, and reported myself ready for duty.

This ship, as I have observed, was formerly a British frigate, but, after she was raised by the Americans, she was fitted out as a letter-of-marque, and sent by her owners on the present voyage.

With mingled feelings of happiness, gratitude and pride, I entered into the service of my country once more, and stepped with

much satisfaction upon the deck of this fine ship. Captain Johnson was an excellent officer; very affable and courteous in his manners; and much beloved by his officers and crew.

If anything could add to the satisfaction I experienced in finding myself on board of an American ship, commanded by agreeable officers, and surrounded by a crew principally of my own countrymen, it was the circumstance of finding several Bostonians, with whom I had formerly been partially acquainted. Among these was Mr. Nathaniel Craft, of Roxbury, who afterwards died at Bordeaux; and Samuel G. Perkins, Esq., of Boston, then a young man, brother of the Hon. Thomas H. Perkins, distinguished for his philanthropy and benevolence. How different is the character of this last-named gentleman from that of many others, who have lived apparently for the sole purpose of leaving to their heirs the inheritance of a bloated fortune; to quarrel about its division, and then perhaps to dissipate, in a few years, what has cost their fathers the labor of a long life to accumulate! Of these all that can be said is,—

they lived—they died,—and their names have perished with them.

“Even half a million
Gets him no other praise”

He toiled and moiled,
Poor muckworm! through his threescore years and ten,
And when the earth shall now be shovelled on him,
If that which served him for a soul were still
Within its husk, 't would still be dirt to dirt.

Having amassed a princely fortune, Mr. Perkins manifests the benevolence of his heart in the liberal use he makes of it; not in ostentation and parade, but for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. He enjoys the satisfaction of doing good, and of seeing the fruits of his goodness while he lives. He does not wait for his works to follow him; he has the pleasure of seeing them go before him. He does not wait for his children to “rise up and call him blessed;” he hears the blessings of grateful hearts, and feels a consciousness of having been a faithful steward.

When I pass through Pearl-street, and look upon his noble bequest, “The Institution for the Blind,”* and reflect upon what a vast amount of happiness he has conferred

* Since removed to South Boston.

upon those unfortunate beings, from whom the blessing of light has been shut, I cannot but think that he will receive a more glorious reward than he enjoys on earth; a welcome into mansions of rest where peace and righteousness forever reign.

To return to my narrative: There were lying in the port of Cape-François, while we were there, several Spanish and French ships of war, in want of men, waiting till they could obtain their complement, with the intention of sailing in quest of the British fleet.

The Sunday previous to our sailing, I, with several of the crew, obtained permission to go on shore. It was customary then in foreign ports to allow the sailors to make use of Sunday as a day of recreation. While we were enjoying ourselves over a bottle of wine in a public house, a large press-gang of Frenchmen suddenly entered, and, seizing upon all of us, hurried us off into their boat; and, notwithstanding our protestations against this outrage upon Americans, conveyed us on board of a French seventy-four. We immediately made known to the captain that we belonged to

the *Flora*, and demanded to be released. But he showed no disposition to comply with our demands, saying that he was in want of hands, and that we should receive as good pay and treatment on board of his ship as in our own.

This was poor consolation for us. It was provoking as well as distressing to be thus imprisoned, as it were, in sight of our own ship; but, having no communication with her, we could not give any information of our situation. We knew that the combined fleet was to sail in a few days;* and although we had no objections to fighting our old enemy, the British, we yet had some choice as it respected the company we fought in, and had but little desire to obey the orders of French officers, or to mingle our blood with that of their crew.

My desire to get away from this ship was as great as it had formerly been to escape from the British at Kingston; and the difficulty of effecting it appeared about as formidable. It was vain to regret that I did

* The combined fleet sailed shortly after, under the command of the Count de Grasse, and were nearly all taken or destroyed by the British fleet.

not spend the Sabbath on board of the *Flora*, instead of carousing at a public house on shore. My regret was sincere; and I resolved never to be guilty of such imprudence again, were I once more safe on board of our good ship.

Of our impressed party, consisting of four or five, not one could swim except myself. We conferred together, and came to the conclusion that the only chance we had for escape consisted in my attempting to swim in the night to the *Flora*, which lay about a quarter of a mile from the seventy-four. I had no fear of not being able to swim that distance; the only danger I apprehended was from the sharks, which were very abundant in those waters.

I agreed with my companions, that this appeared to be the only practicable method of escape; and, after some urging on their part, and some flattery of the honor I should gain by the achievement, I concluded to undertake it that night.

Late at night I went on deck, accompanied by one of my friends, and, finding the sentinel asleep, we went forward, and

divesting myself of my jacket, but keeping on my hat, shirt, and trousers, I slid down by the cable quietly into the water, and struck out for the Flora.

Of all the dangers to which I had been exposed in the course of my adventures, I consider this the greatest. The horror of mind I experienced, whilst swimming, is indescribable. My agitation was so great, that I wonder that I did not sink, through fear of being devoured. I imagined a shark at my feet every time I threw them out. I exerted myself with so much vigor, that in a very short time I was alongside of the Flora, but in so exhausted a state, that I could hardly raise myself over the side of the boat which floated alongside of the ship. I threw myself into the bottom, from which I was scarcely able to move for some time.

After I had recovered a sufficient degree of strength, I ascended the side of the ship, and, finding no one on deck, I lay down in my wet clothes, and putting my hat under my head, slept soundly all night.

When I awoke in the morning, I found

that I was unable to move in consequence of my clothes adhering to the pitch, which the heat of the climate caused to ooze from the seams in the deck. By using considerable exertion, and rolling one way and the other, I at length liberated myself from my confinement, and stood erect once more on the deck of an American ship.

I immediately communicated to Captain Johnson the cause of my absence and the situation of my companions, and their great desire to be again on board of his ship, and the hazardous undertaking I had accomplished to give him information of the circumstances.

Captain Johnson immediately sent an officer with his boat, and demanded the release of his men. The captain of the French seventy-four gave them up and made many apologies, in the polite manner of a Frenchman, for "the mistake that was made in impressing his friends the Americans." Thus I had the satisfaction of being the instrument in restoring my countrymen to their ship, and of finding myself safe in the protection of our excellent commander.

Having taken in our loading of sugar, and everything being ready for sea, we hoisted anchor, and set sail about the middle of May, 1782. The first few days after leaving the Cape, we had but little wind; afterwards we made good progress, and continued on our course without interruption for about a fortnight; when we fell in with a British brig from Liverpool, bound to New York. We took possession of her, and, putting an officer and prize crew on board, ordered her for Boston, where she arrived. I afterwards received thirty dollars as my share of the prize-money.

We continued on our voyage, and, in eight days after, captured a large ship bound to Quebec, loaded with munitions of war and clothing for soldiers, a very valuable prize. She was ordered for Boston, but, unluckily for us, never arrived there, being afterwards recaptured, by a British ship of war, off the Banks of Newfoundland. Had she arrived safely at Boston, my share of the prize-money would have amounted to a considerable sum.

It was nearly three weeks after, when

we arrived off the coast of France, and, having taken a pilot on board, our ship was carried up the Garonne to the city of Bordeaux, where, on account of the rapidity of the current, she was moored both head and stern.

Our ship was soon unloaded, and stripped of her sails and rigging, as preparatory to her being laid up till orders could be received from Boston. Part of the crew were paid off and discharged; the remainder, that chose, were permitted to remain on board upon small wages. Captain Johnson hired a house in the city, where he lived with his servants in a style becoming the dignity of the commander of a fine American ship.

As the *Flora* was a fast-sailing vessel, our captain was in expectation of receiving orders from home to fit her out as a cruiser. In the hope of having another cruise, and anticipating an abundance of captures with the natural consequence resulting, — an enormous amount of prize-money, — I was willing to remain in the ship, with the expectation of being one of her favored crew. We remained at Bordeaux about nine months, and began to grow impatient at not receiv-

ing any directions from home respecting our future operations.

When we arrived at Bordeaux, we found in the harbor, which is very capacious, five or six hundred vessels, bearing the flags of various nations, among which our stars and stripes held a conspicuous place. As we had but little work to perform on board of the ship, much of our time was spent on shore.

With the improvidence characteristic of sailors, our money was spent freely; and in a few days almost every one of the crew graced his pocket with a watch, from which a formidable chain was suspended; and, to complete the equipment, adorned his head with a new hat trimmed with a broad band of gold lace.

When we made a visit on shore, we were very careful to return to the ship before dark, partly on account of the patrol that paraded the streets at night, but principally in consequence of the danger of being on the river after dark. The current of the Garonne is extremely rapid. With the help of the tide, we ascended the river to Bor-

deaux in three or four days; anchoring every time the tide ebbed. The tide rises twice a day to the height of four or five yards, and the velocity of the current sometimes exceeds three yards in a second. Bordeaux, from its commerce and importance, ranks among the first towns in the kingdom, and its harbor is capable of containing a thousand ships.

One night, a number of our crew, after having spent the day on shore, attempted to return to the ship after dark. The boat pushed off with four oars, directing her course for the head of the vessel. She arrived at the starboard bow, and was crossing it so as to bring up on the larboard side, when she unfortunately ran upon the cable, and was immediately drawn under the ship. A boat was let down as soon as possible, and all the men picked up but one, who was drowned. The boat floated off, but was found the next day and brought back to the ship.

Having visited nearly every part of the city, and seen all the wonders of the place, and spent nearly all our money; we began

to grow tired of our monotonous life, and were desirous of being engaged in active service, or of returning to our native land. Twelve or fifteen American vessels were then lying in the port, waiting for orders from home. Among these I recollect the large ship which was commanded by the renowned John Paul Jones, in whose service the American seamen were desirous of engaging.

CHAPTER XIV.

WE began to grow impatient with our long stay in France, and became anxious to return home.

An end was soon put to our anxieties upon this subject. Early in the spring of the year 1783, news arrived of the peace, and that Great Britain, after a contest of seven years, had acknowledged the Independence of the United States. This news ought to have produced as much joy and satisfaction among the Americans in Bordeaux, as it did among their fellow-countrymen at home. But this news, so highly prized in the United States, produced much misery and distress among the seamen in foreign ports. A small number of them only were necessary to navigate the ships upon their return; the remainder were of course discharged, and left destitute of means to enable them to return to their own country. He considered himself fortunate

who could obtain a passage home for the labor he might perform, without receiving any other compensation for his services.

Our excellent captain, Johnson, made great exertions to procure passages for those of his crew whom he did not wish to detain till he received orders respecting the future destination of his ship, and who were anxious to get home. There happened at this time to be on a visit to Bordeaux, the captains of two American brigs, lying at Nantes, bound for Boston, who were in want of hands. These gentlemen wished to obtain sixteen or eighteen American seamen, and Captain Johnson kindly offered to recommend me among that number.

We engaged in the service of these captains, and made a bargain with the captain of a French lugger to carry us to Nantes. We immediately repaired on board, and proceeded slowly down the river, as the current is so swift that it is necessary for a vessel to go down the river stern foremost, dragging an anchor all the time from her bows to retard her too rapid progress. We were nearly three days in getting down the

river, and about as much longer in our passage to Nantes.

Nantes, which held the second rank, after Bordeaux, as a commercial city, is on the right bank of the Loire. It is admired for the regularity of its streets, the elegance of its public buildings, and the magnificence of its quays.

The verdant banks of the river, and the many islands scattered in different directions, give Nantes a picturesque and beautiful appearance.

After our arrival at Nantes, we took lodgings at a boarding-house for a few days, until everything was arranged for our reception on board of the brigs.

In a few days the vessels were loaded, and ready to sail. We weighed anchor, and set sail in April, 1783.

We were two days in getting down the river, and anchored for a few days at Paimbœuf, a town situated on the left bank of the Loire, about thirty miles below Nantes.

We then weighed anchor, for the last time, with a joyful "Yeo-a-hoi," and set sail for our native land;—a land of free-

dom, where I anticipated, with emotions that cannot be described, the pleasure of meeting with relations and friends, from whom I had been so long absent, and where I hoped to enjoy the sweets of liberty, without anything "to molest or make me afraid." I had endured much hardship; encountered many dangers on the ocean and upon the land; and I trust that I had felt grateful for the support and protection I had experienced.

After all my wanderings, I found that I coveted rest, in my dear native land, more than all other things. In the morning of life, as I then was, full of health and strength and buoyant spirits, the idea of once more seeing home gave so much animation to my feelings, that I was enabled to perform my duties with a degree of alacrity scarcely equalled by any of the crew. Every little service I could perform was a pleasure to me, as I was conscious that it helped to forward my onward course to the object of all my wishes—HOME.

"There is a spot of earth supremely blest,
A dearer, sweeter spot than all the rest,

Where man, creation's tyrant, casts aside
His sword and sceptre, pageantry and pride.
Here woman reigns ; the mother, daughter, wife,
Strew with fresh flowers the narrow path of life.
Where shall that land, that spot of earth be found ?
Art thou a man ? a patriot ? look around :
Oh, thou shalt find, howe'er thy footsteps roam,
That land **THY COUNTRY**, and that spot **THY HOME**."

Our voyage was a pleasant one, and nothing uncommon occurred, till we arrived on the American coast, when we fell in with six or eight British ships, bound to England.

Their decks were covered with the well-known "red coats," who had survived the attempt to conquer our country.

As our flag of stripes and stars was conspicuously displayed, they knew that we were "Yankees," with whom they showed no desire to continue an acquaintance.

Our captain hailed them to know "whence they were from, and whither bound?" but no answer was returned. Again he repeated his question ; but his Yankee curiosity was not gratified. He once more put his trumpet to his mouth and roared with a voice like thunder, "Go and be —, we neither love nor fear you."

Our course was directed to Boston, and, shortly after our captain's friendly salutation, we anchored in Nantasket roads, and in a few days arrived in Boston.

I stepped ashore on Long-wharf, in the latter part of May, 1783, after an absence of about three years.

As soon as I could get released from the vessel, I visited my brother James, at Mr. Tuckerman's, where he had lived during my absence, to obtain information respecting my good mother and my brothers and sisters.

From him I received the pleasing intelligence, that the family were all in good health; but that my mother had given up all hope of ever seeing me again on earth. While walking over Boston Neck to Roxbury, where my mother still resided, my brother and I arranged a plan to introduce me to my mother as a sailor, who had just arrived from a foreign port, where he had seen her son Eben., and had some interesting information to communicate concerning him. We soon arrived at the house, and I was formally introduced in the manner pro-

posed. Time, hardship, and exposure to various climates, had produced such an alteration in my personal appearance, that it is no wonder that the eye of maternal affection did not recognize me. The good old lady received me very kindly, and manifested all the interest, which it is natural for a mother to feel towards one who has seen and conversed with a long-absent son.

After having conversed with her for some time, and endeavored to answer a multitude of questions, which soon grew too minute for my ingenuity to invent answers satisfactory to her, I could no longer conceal my impatience to make myself known, and exclaimed, as I arose to embrace her, "Mother, don't you know your son?"

Her joy may be more easily imagined than described. I was at home. The alternate hopes and fears, that had so long agitated her mind, were now all over. She saw me alive and well. It was sufficient; she was satisfied and happy.

She shed tears of gratitude and joy, and we both blessed God that we were permitted to be united in a family circle once more. My four brothers and three sisters, as well

as my mother, were all anxious to hear me relate my adventures, with which I gratified their curiosity as soon as I was able, and which produced many exclamations of fear, of horror, of amazement, and joy.

My story was related at that time to all my acquaintance, and it has been so often repeated in the course of my long life, that all its incidents are so strongly impressed upon my mind, that, at this distant period, I can bring them up in my thoughts with all the freshness of recent transactions.

While I was on board of the ship *Flora*, in the harbor of Cape François, I wrote a few lines to my mother, informing her of my escape from Jamaica, &c.; and this was all the information she had ever obtained concerning me, excepting a knowledge of the fact of my having left the "old Jersey" and enlisted in the British service.

A circumstance transpired, during my absence, highly gratifying and flattering to my feelings, as it served to show me that the poor, wandering boy had friends at home, who manifested a lively interest in his welfare.

Before I enlisted on board of the *Protector*, I had recommended myself to the notice of many respectable gentlemen, who were customers to my master, and have reason to think that my services were acceptable to them.

These gentlemen had received information of the manner in which I had left the prison-ship, and had knowledge enough of my character to conjecture what my motives were for such a proceeding. They had likewise heard that I had been carried to Jamaica, and was performing garrison duty there.

A subscription paper was carried round for the purpose of raising a sum of money, sufficient to purchase my discharge from the British. The names of the gentlemen, who evinced the kindness of their feelings towards me by the liberality of their benevolence, I shall ever remember with gratitude; and, as they continued to be customers to my master after my return, I am able, at this remote period, to pay this humble tribute to their memory. They are as follows:—
Col. Joshua Davis, Dea. Caleb Davis, Gen.

Amasa Davis, Capt. Robert Davis, Ephraim May, Samuel May, Col. John May, Edward Tuckerman, Capt. Nathan Curtis, William Allen of Dorchester, subscribed two guineas; Ebenezer Wales, Ebenezer Dorr, Joseph Dorr, and many others, whose names I do not remember. All of the above named gentlemen are numbered with the dead, and I trust are enjoying the high reward which is promised to those who practise deeds of love and benevolence on earth.

The money, thus raised, was entrusted to the care of a gentleman named Perry, then living on Jamaica Plain in Roxbury, and who was about sailing to the island of Jamaica.

My letter to my mother, from St. Domingo, arrived before Capt. Perry sailed on his voyage, and rendered unnecessary the execution of this benevolent intention for my liberation. No act of kindness, which I have ever experienced, has impressed my mind with more heart-felt gratitude, than the generous act I have related; and, whenever I have met the descendants of my benefactors, some of whom now reside in the south-

early part of Boston, they have had, my secret but sincere wishes for their prosperity and happiness.

I returned to the service of Mr. Bosson,* and remained with him till I was twenty-one years of age, when I established myself in business in my native place, where I have remained to this day. I commenced business in the practice of the trade I had learned; but, after a few years, I relinquished it, and opened a store for the sale of crockery, glass, and hard-ware, in which business I continued till the year 1837,† when, finding my infirmities, especially my deafness, in-

*My share of prize-money was eighty dollars, all of which Mr. Bosson took. As I was his apprentice, and not free, he had a legal right to it; but, as I remembered his agreement was to give me one half of the prize-money and wages I was to receive, and as he retained the whole, I thought I would make an offset by keeping about thirty dollars, my share of the proceeds of a prize, taken while I was on board of the *Flora*, and what wages I had not expended in France. This money I loaned to a friend, who never found it convenient to repay it. Such was the pecuniary result of my three years' suffering. In justice to the memory of Mr. Bosson, it is proper for me to state, that he said that the prize-money he received became of no value in his hands, as he took it in the paper currency of the times.

† In the year 1831, I was appointed Post-Master, at Roxbury, which office, after four or five years, I resigned.

creasing, I thought it time to quit all active employment; and to ride at anchor the remainder of my days.

NOTE BY THE PUBLISHER.

The subject of the preceding pages died in Roxbury, the 14th of December, 1843, in the full possession of his mental faculties to the last moment of his existence. The following obituary notice appeared in the Boston Mercantile Journal.

"Died in Roxbury, on Wednesday, Ebenezer Fox, Esq., 80. Mr. Fox was actively engaged in the revolutionary conflict, and was probably the only survivor of the crew of the ship Protector at the time she had a tremendous action with the British ship Admiral Duff, which resulted in the blowing up of the latter. Mr. Fox was an honest man, and much respected."

APPENDIX.

August 24, 1838, I visited my old shipmate,* **LUTHERA LITTLE**, Esq., at Marshfield, Mass. This gentleman, it will be recollected, was severely wounded in an action with the "Admiral Duff." We had not seen each other for fifty eight years; and the feelings we experienced at meeting, after so long a separation, may be better imagined than described. At the last time I had seen him, he was twenty-four years of age, and I was seventeen.

What a change time has made in our appearance! I never before was so forcibly struck with the truth of the observation, that "time makes ravages."

I found the mental and bodily faculties of Mr. Little uncommonly perfect.

He informed me, that, at the time of our capture, he was placed as prize-master on board of the prize we had in tow; in which he escaped, and arrived at Boston, and thus was so fortunate as to be saved from a long and painful captivity. He did not, after that event, enter into the naval service; but continued his profession on the ocean, as commander of a merchant ship, till he was forty-one years of age, when he retired from his occupation, and devoted himself to agricultural pursuits, on the farm where he was born, which was originally occupied by his great-grandfather, then by his grandfather, whom he distinctly remembers, afterwards by his father, and finally by himself.

A singular instance of stability and attachment to place for the roving sons of New England.

Mr. Little is remarkably active for a man of his years, his sight and hearing being very good, and, surrounded by agreeable and intelligent children, is in the enjoyment of every blessing necessary to make old age comfortable and happy.

My visit was rendered as agreeable to me as the kind and hospitable treatment, prompted by a warm and generous heart, could make it.

* This gentleman died on the 11th of March, 1842, aged 86 years.

From Mr. Little I received information, that his brother George, our first lieutenant, with Captain Williams and the other officers, were carried to England and confined in prison; — that his brother, with some companions in suffering, bribed a sentry; made their escape; crossed the British channel in a small boat, and arrived in safety in France.

Captain Williams remained a prisoner in England, till peace was made.

Mr. Little had supposed, till this visit, that he was the only survivor of all those who once composed the crew and officers of the ship *Protector*; and we presume that none are now living, who ever fought on board of that ship, excepting ourselves.

GEORGE LITTLE, Esq., after rendering his country signal service in the performance of many daring achievements, commanded the frigate *Boston*, well known in our naval history, and died in Marshfield, in a good old age.

On page 95, I have given from recollection a single verse of a song at the ratification of the Federal Constitution by the Massachusetts Convention, concerning Captain JOHN FOSTER WILLIAMS. I have since seen an old newspaper of the year 1788, in which the song is contained; and, as it may gratify some young reader, here insert it entire.

MASSACHUSETTS CONVENTION.

Tune, "Yankee Doodle."

THE 'Vention did in Boston meet,
 But Statehouse could not hold 'em;
 So then they went to Fed-'ral-street,
 And there the truth was told 'em.
 Yankee doodle, keep it up!
 Yankee doodle dandy;
 Mind the music and the step,
 And with the girls be handy.
 They ev'ry morning went to prayer,
 And then begun disputing,

Till opposition silenc'd were
By arguments refuting.
Yankee doodle, &c.

Then 'squire Hancock, like a man
Who dearly loves the nation,
By a conciliatory plan
Prevented much vexation.
Yankee doodle, &c.

He made a woundy fed'ral speech,
With sense and elocution,
And then the 'Vention did beseech
T' adopt the Constitution.
Yankee doodle, &c.

The question being outright put,
Each voter independent,
The Fed'ralists agreed t' adopt,
And then propose amendment.
Yankee doodle, &c.

The other party, seeing then
The people were against 'em,
Agreed, like honest faithful men,
To mix in peace among 'em.
Yankee doodle, &c.

The Boston folks are *deuced* folks,
And always full of "notions ;"
The boys, the girls, their marms and dads,
Were fill'd with joy's commotions.
Yankee doodle, &c.

So straightway they procession made,
Lord ! how *nation* fine, sir !
For every man, of every trade,
Went, with his tools, to dine, sir.
Yankee doodle, &c.

JOHN FOSTER WILLIAMS, in a ship,
Joined with a social band, sir,
And made the lasses dance and skip
To see him sail on land, sir.
Yankee doodle, &c.

O then a *whopping* feast begun,
 And all hands went to eating,
 They drank their toasts, shook hands, and sung
 Huzza for 'Vention meeting.
 Yankee doodle, &c.

Now politicians of all kinds,
 Who are not yet decided,
 May see how Yankees speak their minds,
And yet are not divided.
 Yankee doodle, &c.

Then from this sample let 'em cease
 Inflammatory writing,
 For FREEDOM, HAPPINESS, and PEACE,
Are better far than fighting.
 Yankee doodle, &c.

So here I end my Fed'ral song,
 Composed of thirteen verses,
 May AGRICULTURE flourish long,
 And COMMERCE fill our purses.
 Yankee doodle, &c.

CUDJOE MEN.

As some of my young readers may not understand what is meant by "*Cudjoe Men*," on page 179 of the preceding narrative, I may be excused for giving the following short account of them.

The island of Jamaica was captured from the Spaniards in 1655, during the Protectorship of Oliver Cromwell, by an English armament under Admiral Penn and General Venables. The Spanish inhabitants had in their possession on the island at that time about fifteen hundred enslaved Africans, most of whom, upon the surrender of their masters, retreated to the mountains, from whence they made frequent attacks on the British plantations, giving no quarter to the settlers, and carrying off their booty to the woods and fastnesses in the mountains. They were called Maroons; the word *maroon* signifying, among the Spanish Americans, *hog hunters*; the woods at that time abounding with the wild

boar, and the pursuit of them constituting the principal employment of runaway or fugitive negroes. *Marrâno* is the Spanish word for a *young pig*.

This petty warfare continued from 1655 to 1738, a period of eighty-three years. The Maroons knew every secret avenue of the country, and stole into the distant or new settlements by night, killing the whites, setting fire to the cane-fields and houses, and carrying the slaves into captivity or forcing them to join in the war against their English masters.

During this long period of hostility, the British gained many victories over the Maroons; penetrated into the mountains; and established forts near their secret haunts. They trained their own slaves to repel and fight them from garrisons and barracks on the mountains or in their neighborhood. Each barrack was furnished with a pack of dogs, trained and provided by the whites. These animals were called Spanish dogs, or bloodhounds, and proved extremely serviceable to the English, not only in guarding against surprise in the night, but in tracking the enemy to his secret haunts in the mountains and caves. Notwithstanding all these means of annoyance, the Maroons increased and became more formidable in 1730, under an able black general, named Cudjoe, who gained great renown among them.

In 1737, the British embarked from the Musquito shore two hundred of the Musquito tribe of Indians, and landed them at Jamaica, to hunt down the Cudjoe men after their own mode of hostility, "bush-fighting," or ambuscade.

In 1738, Governor Trelawney made overtures of peace to the Maroons, who, worn down by famine, fatigue, and the assaults of their numerous foes, accepted the English proposals. The articles of pacification commenced in the following words:—

"In the name of God, amen. Whereas captain Cudjoe, captain Accompong, captain Johnny, captain Cuffee, captain Quaco, and several other negroes, their dependents and adherents, have been in a state of war against our sovereign lord the king," &c., &c. The treaty consisted of ~~thirteen~~ articles, in which fifteen hundred acres ~~of land~~ were allotted to one body of the Maroons, who

settled at Trelawney ; and one thousand acres to another body of them, settled at Accompong, Crawford town, and Nanny town.

They spoke a sort of broken English and Spanish, were extremely ignorant and superstitious, and, like the negroes of Guinea, believed in the prevalence of Obi, a species of pretended magic, and the supernatural power of Obeah men.

From their mode of life and constant exercise, they possessed great bodily perfection, seldom beheld among any other class of African or native blacks.

Such was the situation of the Cudjoe men in 1782, when I escaped from Jamaica.

I may as well add what has since befallen them.

An article in the treaty of pacification with Captain Cudjoe, in 1738, had made the Maroons amenable to the British law in cases of murder, theft, &c., committed against the buckras, or whites. In 1795, soon after the dreadful scenes in the island of St. Domingo, now called Hayti, two Maroons were tried for theft, convicted, and punished by being publicly whipped at Trelawney town. This occasioned an insurrection, which threatened a repetition of the same scenes in Jamaica, which had taken place at St. Domingo. The English negro slaves, however, hated the Cudjoe men or Maroons too fervently even to join them in endeavoring to gain their own freedom.

The Maroons in 1795 consisted of about 1600 men, women, and children ; but the insurrection was limited to the Trelawney Maroons, the descendants of Cudjoe and the negroes under his command, who were particularly called Cudjoe men.

The whole of the Accompong Maroons declared in favor of the whites, or *refused to fight the buckras*.

Fifty-eight years had elapsed since the pacification with Gen. Cudjoe ; yet this long period of peace had not enfeebled the Maroons, who resumed the war with fresh vigor and cruelty. But the British established lines extending twenty miles in length through glades and over heights, till the Cudjoe men were reduced to great straits, and pent up in their principal strong hold, called the Cockpits ; a sort of valley or dell, surrounded by ~~wood~~

precipices and broken rocks, and by mountains of prodigious height; in the caverns of which they had secreted their women and children, and deposited their ammunition. The Cockpits could be reached only by a path down a steep rock, one hundred and fifty feet almost in perpendicular height, and totally inaccessible to the whites; but the Cudjoe men, having been habituated to employ their naked feet in climbing up trees and precipices, easily surmounted this obstacle. Their principal suffering was from want of water. This they supplied for some time in the leaves of the *tillandsia maxima*, or wild pine. This is not a tree, but a plant, which takes root on the body of a tree, commonly in the fork or great branches of the cotton tree, and, from the conformation of its leaves, catches and retains water from every shower. Each leaf resembles a spout, and has at its base a natural bucket or reservoir, which contains about a quart of water. — a wonderful provision of Divine Providence.

But even this resource was at length exhausted; and, to add to the terror of the Maroons, forty chasseurs, or Spanish hunters, chiefly people of color, with about one hundred Spanish dogs or bloodhounds, arrived from Havana. These dogs, though no larger than an English shepherd dog, were much dreaded by the Cudjoe men, the whole of whom surrendered to the British troops, in March, 1796, about one year after the commencement of this second and last war. The Spanish dogs, whose keenness of scent, and long training, had made them thus formidable, were formerly used to get rid of the aboriginal Indians of Cuba, &c., who were cruelly hunted down and exterminated by the Spaniards. They are now generally employed in Cuba and South America in the pursuit of wild bullocks, which are killed for their hides, — the dogs driving the cattle from the heights and forests into the plains, where they are slaughtered by the *chasseurs*, or hunters.

In June, 1796, ships having been provided for the occasion, six hundred Maroons or Cudjoe men, the remnant of these restless and cut-throat blacks, were transported from Jamaica to Halifax, for settlement in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Canada.

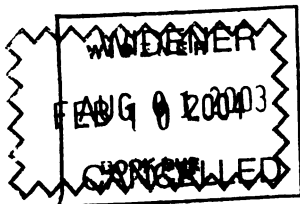
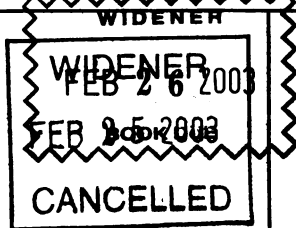
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